

# **Obtaining, Maintaining, and Upgrading Employment**

**A Manual for Substance-Abusing Offenders in Drug Court**



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## **Table of Contents**

### **INTRODUCTION**

### **PART ONE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK-STAGES OF CHANGE**

FINDING THE OPTIMAL TIME FOR INTERVENTION

### **PART TWO: MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING**

WORKING THROUGH THE STAGES OF CHANGE WITH MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING  
APPROACHING MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

### **PART THREE: THE EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR**

EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST/COUNSELOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Identify and Access Community Resources  
Educating Community and Service Providers  
Persuade Service Providers to Help Drug Abusers  
Meet Face-to-Face with Service Providers and Potential Employers  
Conduct Participant Assessment

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR QUALITIES

STRATEGIES FOR MOTIVATING CHANGE

Eliciting Self-Motivating Statements  
Listening with Empathy to Reflectively Respond  
Open-ended Questions  
Feedback  
Affirm the Participant  
Dealing with Resistance  
Reframing

STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING COMMITMENT

Discussing a Plan  
Communicating Free Choice  
Exploring the Consequences of Action and Inaction  
Information and Advice  
Emphasizing Abstinence  
Formalizing a Plan of Change  
Reviewing Change Plan

### **PART FOUR: MANUAL INTERVENTIONS**

BEHAVIORAL CONTRACTING: SECURING COMMITMENT

Developing the Employment Behavioral Contract  
Example Contract  
Special Issues in Employment Behavioral Contracting

THOUGHT MAPPING: ORGANIZING THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS

Using the Map  
Example Thought Map

STRUCTURED STORIES

EMPLOYMENT STRENGTHS-BASED CASE MANAGEMENT

SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING

Practice Exercises

## Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to provide employment counselors and substance abuse counselors with a structured intervention to assist substance abusing participants obtain, maintain, and upgrade employment. This manual utilizes several approaches to achieve this goal. Although employment counselors are strongly encouraged to use motivational counseling (motivational interviewing) throughout the intervention, this manual also integrates several other approaches. These complementary approaches-- behavioral contracting, thought mapping, structured story telling, case management, and social skills-- are described in this section.

This section describes roles and responsibilities of the employment counselor and the approaches used in the intervention sessions. Pre-intervention sessions follow with information on assessment and rapport building. The remainder of the manual includes the sixteen intervention sessions. Each session is designed to provide information and skills training to the participant to increase the likelihood of employment success. These sessions were developed to address very practical concerns in the participant's struggle with employment issues. The manual also provides several handouts to assist in both gathering and providing information to participants.

In order to remain sensitive to issues of gender stereotypes, he and she will be used interchangeably throughout this manual.

*Sections of this manual are adapted from:*

*Miller, W., Zweben, A., DiClemente, C., Rychtarik, R. (1994). Motivational Enhancement Therapy Manual: A Clinical Research Guide for Employment Specialists Treating Individuals with Alcohol Abuse and Dependence. NIH Publication No. 94-3723; Us Department of Health and Human Services; Rockville, MD.*

*Leukefeld, C., Godlaski, T., Clark, J., Brown, C., & Hays, L. (2000). Behavioral Therapy for Rural Substance Abusers. Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky.*

*It is suggested that Employment Specialists also read Miller, W. & Rollnick, S. (1991). Motivational Interviewing: Preparing People to Change Addictive Behavior. The Guilford Press; New York: pp. 3-157.*

## PART ONE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK-STAGES OF CHANGE

Given the complexity of the treatment needs of participants with a substance use background, it is important to consider how employment fits with their larger treatment goals and the recovery process. Therefore, this employment manual is theoretically grounded in the stages of change model (Miller & Rollnick, 1991). As employment counselors use this manual, their roles, responsibilities, and approach to employment counseling should be guided by this model.

A brief overview of the stages of change model will be discussed in this section to provide the context for understanding how participants progress through the changing behaviors which will emerge throughout the manual sessions. This theoretical framework will then be used to guide the approaches in this manual which target obtaining, maintaining, and upgrading employment.

The framework for this manual is based on the logic that any change in human behavior, including the changes that lead from substance abuse and dependency to recovery, progress through the stages of the Transtheoretical Model of Change adapted from Prochaska and DiClemente (1982).

The process involves distinct stages that employment counselors can use as a framework to assess participants' status and to help participants move forward in the change process. This theory of change was modified by Miller and Rollnick (1991) to include relapse as part of the change process and is represented by the figure below (Figure 1.1)

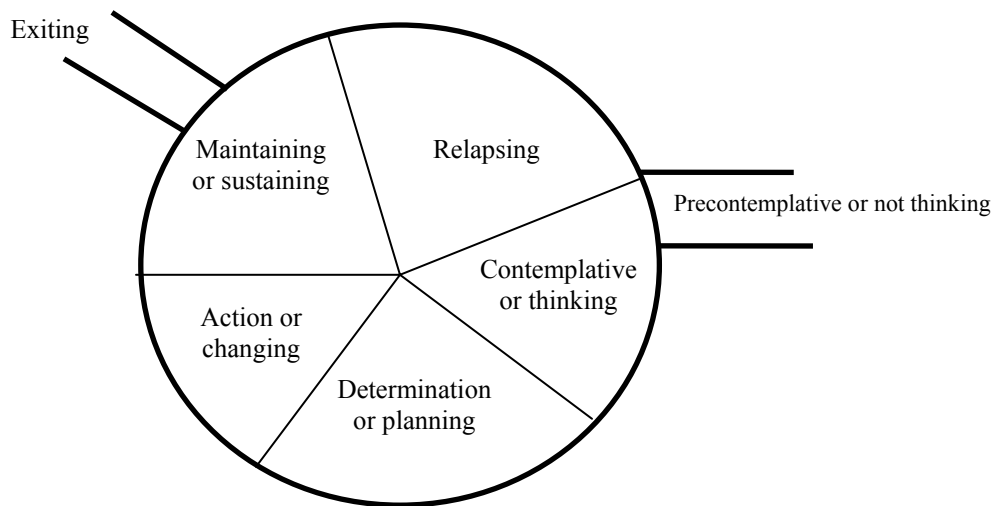


Figure 1.1 Transtheoretical model of change (Adapted from Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982)

### Finding the Optimal Time for Intervention

The recovery change process is comprised of several distinct stages which employment counselors can use as a framework to assess participant motivation and help participants move forward. According to this approach, a participant begins outside the change cycle in a "pre-

contemplative" or "not thinking about changing" state. At this point in the change process, an individual's drug or alcohol use may be affecting his or her employment status. A person may be aware of various problems in his or her life but does not associate these problems with the use of substances. As the individual begins to recognize that the use of substances may be associated with their ability to maintain employment, the person enters the "contemplative" or "thinking about changing" stage of the change cycle. During this stage, ambivalence about change is normal. The desire for positive change and the desire to maintain the status quo alternate in the substance abuser's mind, sometimes moment by moment. As the balance shifts toward positive change, the substance abuser "moves" toward the stage of "determination" or "planning for change". In the determination stage, a substance abuser must formulate a plan of change which is acceptable, workable, appropriate, and effective (Miller & Rollnick, 1991). The determination stage may be a window of opportunity for moving from thinking about a problem to doing something about it. For example, individuals may be receptive to learning skills that may help them improve their employment situation. It is at this stage where the role of an employment counselor may be most helpful.

This window of opportunity for change may be time limited. However, it is important that participants have sufficient time and encouragement to plan positive change. The more thoughtful, concrete, and specific the plan, the more likely successful change will occur. If a workable plan is not formulated the participant moves back to a contemplative stage. When individuals put their plan into effect, they enter the "action" or "changing" stage. This stage involves specific changes in a variety of behaviors that move the substance abuser toward positive changes which may increase their chances of obtaining satisfactory employment. Once change is initiated regarding a number of behaviors, change usually continues over time. When this stage is reached, an individual enters the "maintenance" or "sustaining change" stage. During this stage of change, the new behaviors, together with all the behaviors that support it, are more "normal" and more comfortable.

Initial behavioral change generally involves a different set of skills than maintaining that change over time (Marlatt and Gordon, 1985). If a sufficiently comprehensive change can be maintained, a substance abuser can exit the change cycle for a specific problem behavior. Frequently this does not occur and a substance abuser enters a "relapse" stage in which the change plan collapses and the problematic behavior -- substance abuse and its affect on employment status-- returns. When this happens, an individual must continue through the cycle, examining why the initial plan did not succeed or was not maintained. This leads to new determination, action, and maintenance.

## **PART TWO: MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING**

Motivational Interviewing is the approach used throughout this manual to engage participants and encourage their progression through the steps of change. Through using motivational interviewing techniques, employment counselors can help participants move through stages of change toward recovery as they are improving their employment situation.

### **Working Through the Stages of Change with Motivational Interviewing**

Substance use and related behaviors are approached in the same way that any harmful or unproductive behavior might be viewed. This conceptualization implies that the participant is primarily working against his own resistance. The process is natural and understandable rather than pathological. A participant is not obliged to adopt one specific way of seeing or defining his experience or problem. The way of understanding that leads to change is the one that is encouraged. The employment counselor's role is first to do nothing that will increase resistance and then do what will increase a participant's sense of self-efficacy. Thus, it is the participant rather than the employment counselor who holds the keys to his own recovery and future employment success. This requires the employment counselor to use motivational interviewing therapeutic strategies that are different from the confrontational posture that has often been part of substance abuse counseling.

### **Approaching Motivational Interviewing**

Because Motivational Interviewing recognizes that individuals do not change as the result of a therapeutic intervention but as a result of assessing their own experience and making appropriate decisions (Miller & Rollnick, 1991), the function of this intervention is to assist in this process. Motivational Interviewing shares commonalities with other forms of brief therapy (Miller & Rollnick, 1991). Among these common elements are the value of assessment and feedback (Kristenson, Ohlin, Hulten-Nosslin, Trelle, & Hood, 1983; Miller & Sovereign, 1989; Orford & Edwards, 1977); emphasis on the participant's responsibility for change (Orford & Edwards, 1977; Heather, Whitton, & Robertson, 1986; Miller, Gribskov, & Mortell, 1981); the value of clear advice (Edwards, Orford, Egbert, Guthrie, Hawker, Hensman, Mitcheson, Oppenheimer, & Taylor, 1977; Kristenson et al., 1983; Chafetz, 1961; Elvy, Wells, & Baird, 1988) offering a variety of possible approaches to a problem rather than insisting on one approach (Deci, 1980; Kopel & Arkowitz, 1975; Miller, 1985); the use of counselor empathy (Miller, Taylor, & West, 1980; Valle, 1981); and reinforcement of the participant's self-efficacy (Frank, 1973; Miller, 1985b; Leake & King, 1977). These components function to help participants better understand their own experience. Although there are a number of these skills which can be used as part of Motivational Interviewing, to successfully implement the treatment approach presented in this manual, the employment counselor must be proficient in using open-ended questioning and summarizing feedback. These techniques are important when negotiating behavioral contracts, designing thought maps, completing strength-based case management, guiding structured story telling, and directing discussions in social skills training groups.

These techniques may vary depending upon the exercises to be accomplished during each stage of change. The exercises can be used to guide participants to discover what their process of

change needs to include. As the participant moves through each change stage, so do the techniques employed to accomplish the tasks. These techniques, developed by Miller and Rollnick (1991), are summarized for each stage of change in Figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.2 Based on Miller and Rollnick (1991).**

CHANGE STAGE	EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST TECHNIQUES	POSSIBLE METHODS
Precontemplation	Raise doubt, increase the participant's perception of risks and problems <i>i.e. Substance use may be affecting employment</i>	Open ended assessment questions, summarizing feedback which links employment problems with substance use
Contemplation	Move the balance in favor of change: raise reasons for change, emphasize the risks of not changing, reinforce the participant's sense of self-efficacy <i>i.e. Pros and cons of maintaining a job or continuing unemployed</i>	Decisional Balance Worksheet, focused open ended questions, asking what is needed to bring about incremental change, storytelling
Determination	Assist the participant in developing a plan for bringing about desired change; focus the participant on concrete, specific, and effective strategies <i>i.e. What are the steps to gaining employment</i>	Storytelling, giving advice and making suggestions using a menu of options, using Thought Mapping to clarify the links between substance use and employment
Action	Assist the participant in taking specific behavioral steps toward the desired change; reinforce positive movement <i>i.e. Reinforce participant's efforts to find employment</i>	Case Management, recognizing incremental change, focused open ended questions about the benefits of positive change
Maintenance	Assist the participant in developing strategies to succeed <i>i.e. Help participant prevent relapse and maintain employment</i>	Recognition of the benefits of positive change, identification of other problems which could subvert positive change



Relapse	<p>Assist the participant in reviewing the stages of contemplation, determination, and action in order to develop new plans without becoming discouraged</p> <p><i>i.e. Troubleshoot difficult times while continuing to search for employment</i></p>	<p>Focused open ended questions about the relapse process, use of Thought Mapping to explore relapse and set the stage for deliberation</p>
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## **PART THREE: THE EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR**

Employment counselors and substance abuse counselors work with participants to explore their experiences with substance use and how the effects of drugs and alcohol have influenced their employment. For this manual, their general duty is to use motivational interviewing to help guide participants through the stages of change to eventual recovery and employment success. Throughout this process, there are many roles an employment counselor will take on. Also, employment counselors will want to approach this manual with a certain mindset and with therapeutic strategies to facilitate change. The following sections describe these roles, the employment counselor qualities which will enhance treatment success, and several techniques to be used throughout the manual.

### **Employment Counselor Roles and Responsibilities**

The role of the employment counselor is to help the participant determine employment goals and also to help participants fulfill these goals. To determine what is necessary to establish an employment plan, each employment counselor, in collaboration with the participant, must (a) establish a long-term employment objective, (b) determine short-term actions that may be necessary to meet this objective, and (c) provide support to the participant through the various stages of the employment process. This manual is structured in a way to meet all of these objectives.

In helping participants find jobs, the employment counselor may have several titles some of which may include:

*Job developer* -acting on behalf of participants to assist them in becoming knowledgeable about community, education, and employment resources and striving to create employment opportunities through a network of informed employers and business leaders;

*Employment counselor*- helping participants explore issues regarding past behaviors and experiences while developing participant interest in employment rehabilitation (the counselor helps participants develop a more constructive thought process about the world of work); and

*Case manager*-developing a course of action that will lead to the achievement of an employment skill, supporting an individual's right to work, and making appropriate referrals.

As the employment counselor carries out these roles, he or she will need to engage in several activities to help facilitate a successful employment search for participants. Several of these activities include eliciting assistance from community employers. Through involvement with participants to help them find and upgrade employment, employment counselors should:

## Identify and Access Community Resources

The employment counselor should develop a directory of community resources to assist the participant in finding a job. This directory should contain information about the local community service agencies offering social and other helping services that may be needed by the participants. It should also target agencies that provide job-readiness training, basic education, skills training, supportive services, job development, and job placement. It is suggested that this directory be in a loose-leaf notebook format so that pages may be added, changed, or taken out entirely as new information becomes available or as new agencies begin to provide services to drug treatment participants. The employment counselor should act as a comprehensive information and referral agent to match the appropriate agency with the diverse needs of participants.

The initial steps in organizing and planning the community resource directory involve identifying the types of services needed by participants in the program and the agencies from which those services have commonly been obtained. The types of services, such as temporary agencies or unemployment offices, should form the major sections in the directory, and the agencies providing those services will constitute the entries or pages within each section.

For each agency identified in the directory as providing a needed employment-related service to program participants, an employment counselor should obtain the following information:

- The name, address, and telephone number of the agency;
- The name of a contact person(s) at an agency who has provided or assisted in providing the kinds of services that the program will be seeking for its participants;
- A brief description of the specific types of available services;
- Eligibility criteria that are used to determine whether a particular participant receives services from the agency;
- Provider or registration fees that participants are expected to pay;
- Residency requirements;
- Sex, racial/ethnic, or religious affiliations that might be given service preference;
- Waiting periods or screening procedures that must be performed for services to be received;
- If possible, copies of information sheets from the agencies, as well as specimen applications or history forms that a participant will need to complete in order to receive services; and

- A specific description of any interviews that might be conducted and the kinds of information that would be elicited in an interview.

(Source: Dennis, Fairbank, Bonito, & Rachal, 1991)

The goal of the directory is to have all of the needed employment resources for any particular participant at the fingertips of the employment counselor, primary counselors, and participants. Sources that should appear in the directory include (but should not be limited to) the following:

- employment,
- job skills training,
- vocational rehabilitation,
- educational counseling services,
- physical rehabilitation
- legal aid

Part of assembling the community resource directory is to contact agencies that have not been, at least to this point, providing employment services to program participants. They may not have been involved with program participants because no one in the program provided direct referral. At this time, however, their policies may have changed to serve high-risk participants. It is important that private, as well as public, agencies be contacted and included in the directory. General-purpose, private charitable organizations such as Catholic Charities and Jewish Family Services should be included in the directory. Often they are able to provide, on a relatively timely basis, the kinds of financial and other support assistance that public agencies are unable to provide. This support could include clothing for interviews, job skills training, computer classes, or help with transportation.

#### Educating Community and Service Providers

The employment counselor will want to exchange information and educate potential employers about the employment needs of the participants who are served by the drug abuse treatment program. Some of these needs may be quite general and require little more than the typical kinds of services that one would expect to provide to people who have little or no education, are unemployed, and have few if any job skills. Other employment needs may be more specific and relate to the problems of people who use drugs. Still other needs may relate to particular problems of participants in a specific treatment program.

#### Persuade Service Providers to Help Drug Abusers

To develop employment opportunities for drug treatment clients, employment counselors should network within the local community. Drug treatment participants are often perceived by many employers as controversial or undesirable. This existing bias stems from the stereotyping of drug treatment participants as drug addicts and criminals. Their experience may have been

that such participants do not make good use of the services or follow through with completion of the services. Service providers may have decided, again informally, to limit the amount of resources they will expend on drug abusers. It may be necessary for an employment counselor to exchange information and educate the agencies regarding drug treatment participant's special employment needs.

Thought processes of any employer may be difficult to change because biases and prejudices are generally based on value systems. However, the employment counselor can highlight the potentialities of the prospective applicant to an employer. An employer's biases might be better influenced by a participant's performance on the job when given the opportunity to prove her abilities. On-the-job training and employment tryouts can serve as good resources for the participant because they create employment and training opportunities and also allow the employer to evaluate the participant as a potential employee. On-the-job training opportunities can be accessed through local programs or the Private Industry Council.

#### Meet Face- to -Face with Service Providers and Potential Employers

When possible, the employment counselor should meet face-to-face with agency personnel. Although telephone contacts are quick and easy to establish and can be beneficial, they should be followed up with personal visits. Face-to-face meetings establish a personal rapport with the contact person of the agency. Personal contacts help establish a relationship with a service provider and create a more receptive environment for a participant.

#### Conduct Participant Assessments

Once the employment counselor has collected information on local employment resources, they can begin to assess participants to match their skills with available resources. An important step in employment assistance is to identify and define the participant's current level of employment readiness, interest in changing, and problems that may affect the provision of employment services. This is done in collaboration with the participant, counselors, and other staff and the results may drive the selection of services to be provided and/or sought. Note that each of the following activities builds on the previous activity.

A variety of tools can be used to help in the process, including:

- Strengths-based assessment- working in collaboration with participants to discover what skills they already have which may help them find employment;
- Personality assessment- finding what traits participants may have which would be desirable to potential employers; and
- Work readiness assessment- deciding if participants are more ready for full or temporary employment.

Although employment services are among the most important needs of drug treatment participants, they should be coordinated with all other services provided to the participant by other treatment staff. It is common practice in most drug treatment programs to conduct a psychosocial history of all incoming participants. The employment counselor should start his assessment by reviewing the information that has already been collected in this history prior to determining a vocational plan. Available information may also already include several other standardized psychological, medical, or even vocational assessments.

A thorough evaluation will have the following information when evaluating for employment needs:

- reasons for entering and currently being in treatment, including whether or not treatment is required or suggested by a family member, employer, or criminal justice agency;
- history and current status of residential, family, and social relationships, including the extent of violence, abuse, and anti- or pro-social activities among the participant's family and peers;
- history and current status relative to literacy, education, and employment, including prior experience with major training programs;
- past and current earned income, entitlements, insurance, illegal income, and expenses, including illegal expenses (which typically exceed illegal income and are a drain on legal income);
- history and current alcohol and drug use, including the frequency, pattern, and route of use;
- past and current illegal activity, arrests, incarcerations, probation, parole, and civil justice involvement, including any outstanding warrants, fines, or current proceedings;
- past and current medical problems, disabilities, and treatment needs, including pregnancy and other major medical problems related to drug use such as HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, dental problems, and gastrointestinal problems;
- past and current mental health problems and treatment needs, including any suicidal tendencies and coping strategies;
- past and current treatment and services received in each of the above areas, including services or financial assistance from other agencies or programs; and
- participant's perceptions of his or her problems, counseling needs, and service needs, as well as the counselor's perception (which may differ if there is some level of denial).

### **Employment Counselor Qualities**

In order to facilitate the successful execution of these techniques, several qualities are desirable

in the employment counselor. The employment counselor should have:

- Comfort with different attitudes, beliefs, and values
  - Comfortable with attitudes, beliefs, and values different from their own
  - Comfortable discussing such differences without the need to argue or persuade
- Tolerance for disagreement and ambivalence
  - Not taken aback when participants disagree with them
  - Recognize that participant ambivalence about change is normal and acceptable
- Patience with gradual progress
  - Comfortable with gradual participant progress toward a desired goal
  - See incremental change as real progress
- A genuine interest in and care for participants as individuals
  - Find their participants interesting as people
  - Have a desire to know about others experiences

The task of the employment counselor is to create an environment that will enhance the participant's own motivation for and commitment to change by combining the previously mentioned motivational interviewing techniques and their own personal characteristics. Rather than relying on the therapeutic environment, the employment counselor seeks to mobilize the participant's inner resources as well as encouraging her to use those supportive relationships. The employment counselor's actions are always directed at increasing the probability that the participant will undertake, sustain, and successfully complete a plan of positive change.

Miller and Rollnick have identified five basic principles to help employment counselors develop a foundation for using motivational interviewing strategies.

#### 1. Express Empathy & Communicate Respect for the Participant

- Avoid communication that implies a superior/inferior relationship
- Respect participant's freedom of choice and self direction
- Recognize only participants can decide to change behaviors and carry out that change
- Find ways to compliment and build up rather than criticize and break down
- Use reflective listening to communicate acceptance of participants

#### 2. Develop Discrepancy

- Motivation for change occurs when people perceive a discrepancy between where they are and where they want to be
- Focus the participant's attention on discrepancies that arise as a result of behavior
- Raise the participant's awareness of the negative consequences of their actions to increase their perception of discrepancies
- Move toward a frank discussion of the changes required to lessen these discrepancies

### 3. Avoid Argumentation

- Ambivalence and discrepancies can resolve into defensive coping strategies which do not alter the drug using behavior
- Attacking the drug using behavior tends to provoke a defensive response from the participant and communicates to her that the employment counselor does not really understand
- Motivational Interviewing specifically avoids all argumentation that increases defensiveness
- Don't push the participant to accept or admit to any specific diagnostic label by convincing or proving by force of argument
- Employ other strategies to assist the participant in seeing the consequences of behavior and devaluing the perceived importance of the drug induced experience
- The participant, not the employment counselor, should state the arguments in favor of change.

### 4. Roll with Resistance

- Do not meet resistance head on but rather roll with its force, attempting to shift the participant's perspective in the process
- Ambivalence is seen as a normal part of the change process and new ways of thinking about problems are invited, not imposed
- Solutions are most often evoked from the participant and not imposed by the employment counselor
- Use reflective listening to help participants find these solutions

### 5. Support Self-Efficacy

- Self-efficacy is a critical determinant in behavioral change (Bandura, 1977).
- It is necessary is that the participant believes that he or she can change a specific behavior.
- If one has no hope that things can change, there is little reason to confront a problem.

## **Strategies for Motivating Change**

In early Motivational Interviewing, strategies focus on developing participant self-motivation to change their behavior. Some participants may enter treatment with significant awareness of the employment problems related to their drug use and with determination to change. Other participants enter treatment with little awareness of the problems posed by their drug use and are often defensive. In both cases, opening strategies, which are designed to tip the scales in favor of change, should be used. In the case of an already motivated participant, this tests the depth of



motivation and strengthens it. In the case of an unaware participant, this establishes an awareness of discrepancy on which motivation can build.

The following motivational interviewing techniques should be used when conducting each session in the manual. These techniques will be especially helpful when facilitating group discussion or asking open-ended questions to group members. Keep in mind that sessions will not explicitly call for the use of the techniques. However, employment counselors should be familiar with each of them and use them throughout the sessions to help participants change.

### Eliciting Self-Motivating Statements

In Motivational Interviewing, the employment counselor focuses on statements that represent movement toward change. Examples which suggest that progress toward change is being made include:

- Being open to input about drug use;
- Acknowledging real or potential problems related to drug use;
- Expressing a need, desire, or willingness to change.

One way to elicit such self-motivating statements is to ask for them, using open-ended statements or questions.

- I assume from the fact that you are here, that you have some concerns or difficulties about your employment. Tell me about these.
- Tell me a little about your drug use. What do you like about using drugs? What's the positive side of drug use for you? What's the other side of the coin: What are some of your worries about drug use?
- Tell me what you've noticed about your drug use over time. How has it changed? What things have you noticed that may concern you or which you think might pose potential problems? What about for employment?
- What have other people told you about your drug use? What are other people worried about? Have previous bosses or co-workers expressed problems with your use?
- What makes you think that you might need to make a change in your drug use?

These questions can be used initially with a participant or can be added to the evaluation, which is presented later. Once you get going with the participant, simply explore aspects of experience with drugs in various areas of his or her life. The goal here is to encourage discussion about the drug use to allow for movement to the contemplative or thinking stage of change. Using open-ended questions and statements best does this. Likewise, when talking about various problem areas in the participant's life, ask about the participant's perception about a connection between a problem with finances, personal relationships, employment, etc. and drug use.

Occasionally, employment counselors may encounter special difficulty in eliciting any self-motivating statements from particular participants. In such cases, another strategy to employ is the use of gentle paradox. In this strategy the employment counselor voices the participant's resistance in an attempt to allow the participant to take the other side. This approach should be

used with some caution and should be attempted only by employment counselors who can do it comfortably without sarcasm. Here are some examples.

- You haven't convinced me yet that you are seriously concerned. We have been working through the assessment process now for some time. Is that all you're concerned about?
- I'll tell you one concern that I have. This program is one that requires a fair amount of motivation from people, and frankly, I'm not convinced from what you've told me so far that you're motivated enough to carry through with it. Are you sure that you want to continue?
- I'm not sure how much you are interested in changing your drug use. It sounds like you might be happier just continuing on as you have before.

Likewise, a participant may change their opinion if you state it in an extreme form.

- So using drugs is really important to you. Tell me about that.
- What is it exactly about drug using that you have to hang on to, that you can't seem to let go of?

In general, however, it is always best not to have to use these strategies. Without doubt the best way to get a self-motivating statement is to ask for it using the previously mentioned open-ended questions.

### Listening with Empathy to Reflectively Respond

The way an employment counselor responds to what the participant has to say is critical in Motivational Interviewing. The optimal response is accurate empathy (reflective listening or active listening). In this style of interaction, the employment counselor listens carefully to the participant and then reflects the statement back to the participant in a slightly modified or reframed form. This way of responding offers the following advantages:

- It is unlikely to evoke participant resistance.
- It encourages the participant to keep talking and exploring the topic.
- It communicates respect and caring; building a working therapeutic alliance.
- It clarifies for the employment counselor exactly what the participant means.
- It can be used to reinforce ideas expressed by the participant.

This last point is especially important in Motivational Interviewing. The employment counselor uses reflective statements selectively to reinforce the participant's self-motivating statements. The employment counselor thus can direct the interaction in a way that reinforces the intent of the participant to change and, in doing so, increases the probability that the participant will move toward productive change. Further, such selective reflection encourages the participant to elaborate on his/her initial self-motivating statement.

Here is an example of reflection.

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: What else concerns you about your drug use?  
PARTICIPANT: Well, I'm not sure I'm concerned about it but I do sometimes wonder if I'm using too much.  
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: Too much for . . .  
PARTICIPANT: For my own good, I guess. It's not like it's really serious, but sometimes I feel really awful, and I can't think straight some of the time.  
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: It messes up your thinking, your concentration.  
PARTICIPANT: Yes and sometimes I have trouble remembering things.  
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: And you wonder if that might be because you're using too much.  
PARTICIPANT: Well, I know it is sometimes.  
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: You're pretty sure about that, but maybe there's more.  
PARTICIPANT: Yeah – sometimes even when I'm not doing anything I mix things up, and I wonder about that.  
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: Wonder if . . .  
PARTICIPANT: If the drugs aren't frying my brain.  
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: You think that that can happen to people, maybe to you.  
PARTICIPANT: Well can't it? It's like that old ad with the egg and the frying pan. "Here's your brain on drugs."  
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: Yes, well I can see how you might be worried.  
PARTICIPANT: But I don't think that I'm an addict or anything.  
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: You don't think that you're an addict but you do think that you might be overdoing it and damaging yourself in the process.  
PARTICIPANT: Yeah.  
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: Kind of a scary thought. What else worries you?

Reflective listening is not the only strategy used in Motivational Interviewing but it is a central one. It is not an easy one to practice consistently. The employment counselor must listen closely to the verbal and non-verbal expressions of the participant, formulate reflective statements at the appropriate level of complexity, and constantly adjust hypotheses about the participant's meaning and state of mind to do it well. Optimal reflective listening suspends advice, agreement, disagreement, suggestions, warnings, teaching, and questions in favor of continued exploration of the participant's own process.

In working with participants who are ambivalent, employment counselors should reflect both sides of the ambivalence. When only one side is reflected, ("So you can see that your drug use is causing some problems with your employment.") it may cause the participant to reinforce the other ("Well, I don't think I have any problem, really."). In such cases it is always best to use a two-sided reflection:

- You don't think that your drug use is a problem right now and at the same time, you worry that it could get out of hand and cause some problems in the future.

- You really like using drugs and don't like the idea of giving them up and you can also see that they are causing some problems with your girlfriend and with your job.

### Open-ended Questions

In Motivational Interviewing, opened-ended questions are not only used to elicit self-motivation, but are also used to assist the participant in exploring various aspects of her experience. The evaluation format presented in this manual uses such questions to explore many areas of the participant's life experience. Open-ended questions can also be used to invite the participant to explore possible solutions to perceived problems. Such questions can be used in the evaluation of Phase One and after giving feedback to the participant to get a commitment for continued treatment. They are also helpful in case management to encourage participants to express acceptable solutions to problems which may interfere with treatment or with change.

### Feedback

In Motivational Interviewing, the employment counselor gives the participant summarizing feedback at critical points in the therapeutic interaction. Such summarizing feedback allows the participant to see how their experiences are connected. When employment counselors do this, they should also attempt to make connections between the participant's experience and his drug-using behavior. This allows the participant to begin to make connections between their own experiences, problems, and drug use. The employment counselor should be careful not to force this but to point them out from the information that the participant has provided. The assessment format provided in this manual helps employment counselors to stop at the end of each section to provide summarizing feedback. These interactions can raise the participant's awareness of the role of drug use in his life. Positive change and growth is facilitated when we can see that certain activities are consistently associated with desirable outcomes while others are consistently associated with undesirable ones.

Feedback should be offered in the form of a reflective response that seeks to determine the accuracy of the employment counselor's perception. For example:

- Let me make sure that I have understood what you told me. You started using drugs when you were thirteen. At first you occasionally smoked marijuana with your older brother and some of his friends but by the time you were fourteen you were using it daily and selling marijuana to supply yourself. At about the same time your grades started to suffer and you got in trouble for possession at school so you dropped out by the time you were fifteen. All of this caused a lot of conflict with your parents so you left home and went to live with your older brother. When you couldn't find a job, one of his friends turned you on to dealing crack. You started using crack as well as dealing it and when you were sixteen; you got arrested for possession with intent and spent two years in a juvenile lock up. When you got out, you went straight for about six months but the best job you could find was minimum wage so you went back to dealing. For the last four years, you've been dealing, using and working various low wage jobs. Two weeks ago you were arrested for possession as the result of a traffic

stop and you came to treatment on the advice of your attorney. Does that sound about right to you?

- Let me make sure that I understand what you have told me about your relationship with your wife. You met your wife through a mutual friend. You both liked to drink, to smoke marijuana, and party. After a few months of dating, you married and moved into an apartment. Everything seemed to be going fine for the first year of your marriage: you both worked and spent your weekends partying with friends. When your wife became pregnant she stopped using and didn't want to go out partying with you any more. This became a source of conflict because you didn't feel that you should stay at home simply because she wanted to. Things got worse after your daughter was born. You felt that so much of your wife's time was taken up with the baby that there was nothing much for you at home. You started going out during the week, drinking and using and would often come home very late. Then, you wouldn't make it to work the next day. Your wife started to complain about your drinking and drug use especially after you lost your job because of unexcused absences from work. While you were unemployed for two months, you spent money on drugs that were needed for paying the utility bills. When your wife discovered that the electric company was threatening to shut off service, she left with the baby, and moved in with her family. She told you that unless you did something about your drinking and drugging and became responsible enough to hold a job and support your family, she would file for divorce. At that point you decided to come here and talk to me about what's going on in your life. Do I have it?

As the employment counselor offers summarizing feedback, he should watch the participant's reaction. Participants often may be surprised when they hear a large piece of their life experience condensed into a few sentences. They may find it difficult to accept the clear relationships among various problems in their lives and their use of drugs. Employment counselors should reflect back the affect that they observed.

- This seems pretty difficult for you to hear.
- You seem surprised by what I just said.
- You're shaking your head. Did I get something wrong or misunderstand something that you've told me?

### Affirm the Participant

In Motivational Interviewing, the employment counselor seeks opportunities to compliment and affirm the participant. Recognizing the participant's sincerity in seeking answers to the problems of his life, having the courage to confront a difficult situation, or being willing to look at alternate approaches to a problem are all things the employment counselor should affirm. Such affirmation serves multiple purposes:

- Strengthening the working relationship between employment counselor and participant
- Enhancing the participant's sense of empowerment and personal responsibility
- Reinforcing the participant's efforts and self-motivating statements

- Supporting the participant's self-esteem.

### Dealing with Resistance

Employment counselors must deal with resistance. In certain clinical approaches resistance is seen as a characteristic of the participant or a characteristic of their addiction. In Motivational Interviewing resistance is a reality: it is a response of the participant to something that the employment counselor is doing.

There are certain responses to participant resistance, which are very likely to evoke even stronger and more rigid resistance. The following types of responses are avoided in Motivational Interviewing:

- Arguing, disagreeing, challenging
- Judging, criticizing, blaming
- Warning of negative consequences
- Seeking to persuade with logic or evidence
- Interpreting or analyzing the "reasons" for resistance
- Confronting with authority
- Using sarcasm or disbelief

Motivational Interviewing instead offers alternatives to deal with resistance. These alternatives adhere to the central goal of encouraging the participants to make self-motivating statements. Several employment counselor responses that can deflect resistance and may lead toward self-motivating statements follow.

- **Simple Reflection.**  
Sometimes simply reflecting back to the participant what she is saying can provoke the participant to take the opposite side and balance the picture.
- **Reflection with Amplification**  
This is a simple modification in which the employment counselor reflects back what the participant is saying but in a slightly amplified or exaggerated way. Employment counselors must be careful not to overdo the amplification or the participant is likely to hear it as sarcasm and respond with hostility.  
  
PARTICIPANT: I'm not a loser addict who can't hold a job.  
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: You don't want to be labeled.  
PARTICIPANT: No, I don't think I have a problem.  
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: So as far as you can see, you really haven't experienced any harm or problems as a result of your drug use.  
PARTICIPANT: Well, I wouldn't say that, exactly.  
EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: So you think that sometimes your drug use has caused employment problems but you don't like being called an addict.

- Double Sided Reflection

The last statement in the example above is a double-sided reflection. The employment counselor reflects back both the resistance and the other side of the issue that was discussed earlier in a session.

PARTICIPANT: But I can't stop using marijuana. I mean all of my friends at work smoke.

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: You can't imagine how you could not smoke marijuana with your work friends, but at the same time you worry about the effect it is having on you.

- Shifting Focus

Another strategy for dealing with resistance is to move the attention away from the area of resistance. This is especially useful if the resistance is the result of the participant confronting an issue that she is not yet ready to address.

PARTICIPANT: But I can't stop using marijuana. All of my friends smoke.

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: You're getting way ahead of things. I'm not talking about your quitting marijuana here, and I don't think that you should get stuck on that concern right now. Let's just stick with what we're doing here – reviewing your experience and working on getting you a better job– and later on you can decide what, if anything, you want to do about your use of marijuana.

- Rolling with Resistance

Sometimes resistance can be met by moving with it. There is a paradoxical element to this that can often bring a participant back to a more balanced view. This can be especially effective with participants who present in a highly oppositional manner and who reject every idea or suggestion.

PARTICIPANT: But I can't stop using marijuana. I mean all of my friends' smoke.

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR: And it may very well be that when we're through and you have found a job that pays well and that you like, you'll decide that it's worth it to keep on using marijuana as you have been. It may be just too difficult to make a change. That will be up to you.

## Reframing

Reframing is a strategy in which the employment counselor invites the participant to examine her experience in a new or reorganized way. When done well, new meaning is given to what has been said. Tolerance is a good example. Many addicts are proud of the fact that they can use large amounts of a drug and still function or that they can use doses of a drug that would be fatal to a normal participant. However, this can also be seen as vulnerability since the normal defenses of the body which signal when enough of an intoxicant has been taken have been disabled or may have never functioned properly. This leaves the individual more vulnerable to dependence and to the damaging effects of various drugs on the tissues of the body.

Reframing can move participants toward taking action to resolve problems. By placing the problems in a more positive or optimistic light, the employment counselor also communicates that the problem is solvable and that the participant has adequate internal resources. Employment counselors use reframing the participant's own words, views, and perceptions. Here are some examples.

- Drug use as a reward: “ You may have a need to reward yourself on the weekend for successfully handling a stressful and difficult job during the week.” The implication here is that there may be other ways the participant can reward herself.
- Drug use as a protective function: “You don’t want to impose additional stress on your family by openly sharing difficulties about work or concerns in your life like not having enough money for bills or your feelings of depression at not being able to make a good wage. As a result you carry all of this yourself and try to relieve the tension by using pain killers as a way of trying not to burden your family.” The implication here is that the opiate addict has inner strength or reserve, is concerned about his family, and could discover other ways to deal with these issues besides using drugs.
- Drug use as an adaptive function: “Your use of drugs can be a way of avoiding conflict or tension at work. Your use of sedatives tends to keep the status quo to keep things as they are. It seems you have been taking drugs to keep going to work, yet your drug use seems to keep you from getting to work every day.” The implication is that the participant cares about her job and has been trying to keep things together but needs to find a more effective method to accomplish this.

Reframing often has the paradoxical effect of moving the participant toward change even though it places the problem behavior in a positive light.

### **Strategies for Strengthening Commitment**

Once the decision has tipped in favor of change, and the participant has developed sufficient motivational impetus, employment counselors need a different set of strategies to consolidate the movement toward change. These strategies are geared toward moving the participant into a planning and action-change stage. Timing is important when shifting from one set of strategies to another. Although there may not be a clear and specific point at which participants move from one stage of change to another, there are indications that a change in employment counselor strategy is needed.

- The participant stops resisting and raising objections.
- The participant asks fewer questions about problems and more questions about possible solutions.
- The participant appears to be more settled, resolved, unburdened, or peaceful.
- The participant makes self-motivating statements about the need to make changes.
- The participant begins to imagine how her life might be different if change occurred.



The following questions can help determine a participant's readiness to accept, continue in, and benefit from further counseling. Conversely, these issues can also be used to recognize participants who may be at risk of prematurely withdrawing from treatment (Margolis, Robert & Zweben, 1998).

- Has the participant missed previous appointments without notice or rescheduling?
- Does the participant display hesitancy or indecisiveness about participating in future sessions?
- Does the participant seem to be guarded during sessions or otherwise hesitant or resistant when any suggestion is offered?

If the answers to these questions suggest that the participant is not motivated for change, then strategies for strengthening commitment are premature. In such cases, continued use of the strategies, described earlier in this manual, are appropriate.

It is important to note that even when a participant is motivated to change, ambivalence will still be present. In the change process, ambivalence is a factor until the change occurs and the benefits of change are clear. Employment counselors need to recognize this and not press for too much change too soon. It is necessary that the employment counselor take the lead from the participant and create an atmosphere in which the participant feels comfortable talking openly. Sooner or later, however, the employment counselor will have to move to the strategies discussed in this section of the manual.

### Discussing a Plan

The shift here is from a focus on the reasons for change to negotiating an employment change plan. Participants may signal the need for this shift by asking the employment counselor about possible actions for bringing about change or the employment counselor may test the water by asking transitional questions like the following:

- What do you make of this? What are you thinking you'll do about this?
- Where does this leave you in terms of your employment? What are your plans?
- I wonder what you're thinking about your ability to get a good job at this point.
- Now that you're this far, I wonder what you might do about these concerns?

The employment counselor's goal is to obtain some ideas about, and ultimately, a specific plan for change. It is not the employment counselor's task to determine how the participant will change or even to teach specific skills for doing so. The essential message remains, "Only you can change your employment status, and it's up to you." Additional questions may be helpful to the participant in specifying a plan:

- How do you think you can accomplish that?
- What kinds of things do you think might help?
- Can you be more specific in helping me understand specifically how you intend to do that?

## Communicating Free Choice

Throughout Motivational Interviewing, the participant's autonomy, responsibility, and freedom of choice are stressed. As the participant moves toward specifying plans for change, it is a good idea to emphasize these basic realities about employment.

- It's up to you what you do about it.
- No one can decide for you.
- No one can change your drug use for you. Only you can do it.
- You are perfectly free to go on being unemployed or working at a job you hate, as you were, or you can change.

## Exploring the Consequences of Action and Inaction

In moving toward a specific change plan, it is helpful for participants to have a clear notion of the consequences that follow on changing or not changing a specific behavior. Employment counselors can directly ask participants what they imagine the benefits and liabilities might be if they changed their employment status or not changed it. It is also a good idea to discuss any fears they may have about changing jobs or obtaining a job. Questions include:

- How do you think your life might be different, both positively and negatively, if you found a new or better job?
- Given your past experience, what do you anticipate you are likely to experience over the next five years if you continue to stay unemployed or working at an unsatisfactory job?
- What do you see as the advantages of changing your employment status and what do you see as the advantages of keeping your employment status as it is now?

As a follow-up to such questions, the employment counselor should use reflection, summarizing and reframing. It is also possible to make a decisional balance worksheet, which lists the positives of a specific decision on one side of the page and the negatives on the other.

## Information and Advice

It is not unusual for participants to ask for information and advice as they move toward specific employment change plans. After all, if they have never attempted to change their employment seeking behavior, there is really no reason why they should know everything there is to know about going about it. It is appropriate for the employment counselor to respond to a specific request for information and advice but to do so with certain qualifications and the permission for the participant to disagree. This may seem strange to some employment counselors, but such caution in giving information and advice leaves it clear that the participant is the one who must accept and act on whatever input the employment counselor has to offer. It is impossible to list all the possible situations in which a participant might ask for information or advice, but some general examples of the framing of responses follow.

- If you want my opinion, I can certainly give it to you. But it is important that you realize that you are the one who has to make up your own mind.
- I can tell you what I might do in a similar situation, and I'll be glad to do that, but remember that it's your choice. Are you sure you want my opinion?

- I can give you the information you are asking for, but remember that you are the one who has to decide what to do with it.
- I really can't tell you what to do in this situation, but I can share with you what I have seen other people do that has been helpful to them.

When asked to give an overall opinion about the participant's situation, the employment counselor should be honest. Within the framework already suggested, the employment counselor can honestly address general issues.

- Since you asked, I can give you my opinion. Remember, however that you can accept it or reject it. It's my experience that individuals I've worked with over the years who have experience similar to yours do best if they consider not using any drugs or drinking at all when trying to obtain or maintain employment.
- The best advice I can give you is that it's my experience that people who want to change their employment and drug using behavior have a lot easier time of it if they also change what they do for recreation and who they spend time with. Do you think that makes sense in your situation?

When it comes to specific advice, employment counselors who use Motivational Interviewing should be very reluctant. Participants are likely to take such advice as a prescription without accepting any real responsibility for the outcome. In such a case, even very good specific advice may be less likely to have a positive outcome. The energy which fuels behavioral change must come from the participant and that energy is largely determined by how clearly they own the specific means of bring about that change. Requests for specific "how to" advice needs to be directed back to the participant.

- How do you think you might best deal with that?
- You'd have to be pretty creative (or determined, or courageous, or strong, etc.) to deal with that. I wonder how you could do it.

If the participant asks for specific information as opposed to specific advice, the employment counselor can give it. If you don't know the specific information being requested, be honest in admitting that you don't know and offer to find out by the next session or to call the participant with the information as soon as you can get it. Employment counselors should not feel obliged to know every possible piece of information. Being an educated and competent professional often means knowing how to find out what you need to know.

### Emphasizing Abstinence

Every drug-using participant should be given, at some appropriate point, why it may be beneficial to them to stay abstinent. In this way, working with drug using participants is different from working with participants who use alcohol only, or don't use substances at all. Ethically, employment counselors may not encourage participants to do something that is potentially harmful. Since using drugs is illegal, encouraging or supporting participants in drug use may lead them to legal harm. However, in Motivational Interviewing, and probably in reality as well, employment counselors do not "permit", "let", or "allow" participants to make choices about their drug use. The choice is always the participant's. In emphasizing abstinence, the following points are helpful.

- Abstinence is always safe. If you don't use any drugs you may be relieved of many employment problems you have experienced in the past. Although you will still experience difficulties related to living, being clean and sober will allow you to maintain a job and more effectively solve problems you do have.
- There are a number of good reasons to experience abstinence. Among the reasons are: to increase the likelihood you can find and keep a good job that you enjoy, to find out what it feels like to live drug free, to explore more objectively one's involvement with drugs, to try out some new behaviors, to change some old habits, to improve relationships with family members and to avoid future legal problems.
- Abstinence from drugs will allow your body the time it needs to heal from the damage caused by past drug use. It will also prevent further damage to your body and organ system.

When discussing abstinence, employment counselors should remember to present this as a choice that is only their participants to make.

### Formalizing a Plan of Change

Employment counselors will continue to work with participants as they create a plan for change. The success of any change process will be relative to the suitability of each goal and the willingness of the participant to follow through with goals. The object here is to assist the participant as they create short-term and long-term goals. Possible ways to address each of these elements are:

- "I wonder if you can describe for me what changes you have decided to make."  
Encourage participants to express goals or "plans" in terms of what they will do rather than what they no longer want to do.
- "Would you be willing to walk me through your plan of change one step at a time? What do you intend to do first?"  
Be specific when planning the steps that will lead them to the goal. Participants may request some advice or additional information from employment counselors.
- "Can you describe for me how other people can be of assistance to you in carrying out your plan of change?"  
Encourage participants to allow others to help them. The support of others is a vital part of a successful recovery program. Require that methods of accessing the assistance of others be very specific.
- "How will you know that your plan is working?"  
When completing the "rewards" aspect of the behavioral contract, participants need to specify what results they expect when they achieve one aspect of their short-term plan. It is the employment counselor's role to assist participants in having realistic expectations and time frames.

- “Is there anything that might interfere with your plans for change?”  
Help participants anticipate possible problems that may arise as they attempt to change. Help them be “on guard” for statements like, “I know I will never \_\_\_\_\_ unless \_\_\_\_\_”. These statements can open a door for the employment counselors to help participants formulate plans for overcoming obstacles and developing prevention plans.

### Reviewing Change Plan

As a participant moves toward a specific change plan and acts on that plan the employment counselor should review the participant’s progress. Participants can become narrowly focused on a present problem and “block out” what has already been accomplished. Likewise, as participants implement their plans, they may discover that change may be slower or require more effort. When the employment counselor reviews the participant’s progress and reminds the participant of all the reasons for change, the participant can regain perspective and renew a sense of self-efficacy. It is important that the employment counselor use the participant’s own self-motivating statements.

## **PART FOUR: MANUAL INTERVENTIONS**

Throughout the Pre-intervention sessions and group sessions, several main treatment interventions will be utilized. Behavioral contracting is used to secure commitment from participants. Thought mapping is used to help participants increase their problem solving abilities and learn to connect their behaviors to consequences. Structured stories are used to add depth and personalization to sessions, to help participants identify with other individual's experiences. Strengths-based case management is used to help participants focus on building strengths while acknowledging past criminal history. Lastly, social skills training is used to improve participant's interpersonal skills and increase personal traits that would be desirable to potential employers. Following is a more detailed description of each intervention.

### **Behavioral Contracting: Securing Commitment**

Changing employment patterns can be facilitated with a behavioral contract. Employment counselors often use behavioral contracts when providing strengths-based case management to participants. A behavioral contract is a written agreement between a participant and his employment counselor. Sometimes significant others are also part of a contract. Using a contract to establish specific goals has been widely used and has important implications for counseling. While these kinds of contracts are not legally binding, signing a name to an agreement often intensifies the importance of the agreement and encourages a participant to commit to change (Gambrill, 1997).

Behavioral contracts have been widely used in many areas of education and treatment. For example, contracts have been found to be effective in modifying eating behavior in anorexic females (Solanto, Jacobson, Heller, Golden, & Hertz, 1994), and weight loss (Anderson, Mavis, Robinson, & Stoffelmayr, 1993). Contracting with suicidal patients to agree not to engage in harmful behaviors has been shown to be somewhat effective (Pary, Lippmann, & Tobias, 1988; Kernberg, 1993). Other studies report the effectiveness of contracting for establishing behavioral limits in the treatment for those with personality disorders (Yeomans, Selzer, & Clarkin, 1993; Miller, 1991; Selzer & Carsky, 1990); for decreasing juvenile probationary violations (Welch & Holborn, 1988); and for increasing family involvement in reducing schizophrenic participants' recidivism (Heinssen, Levendusky, & Hunter, 1995; Atwood, 1990). Behavior contracting has also been used with students to improve their attention to tasks and increase their emotional self-control (Ruth, 1996) with behavioral contracting.

Behavioral contracting also increases compliance (Gambrill, 1997). For example, it has been shown that using behavioral contracts with participants who are terminating treatment increased the likelihood that they attended aftercare (Singh & Howden-Chapman, 1987). Using behavioral contracts with family members of alcohol dependent participants increased their disulfiram (antabuse) compliance (O'Farrell, 1989; O'Farrell & Bayog, 1986). Family contracts with cocaine abusers increased positive treatment outcomes (Higgins, Budney, Hughes, Bickel, Lynn, & Mortensen, 1994). Opiate dependent participants relapsed less often (Calsyn, Wells, Sazon, Jackson, Wrede, Stanton, & Fleming, 1994) when contracting was used. In addition, outcomes for dual diagnosis participants were enhanced when behavioral contracting was a part of treatment (Woody, McLellan, & O'Brien, 1984; Linehan, 1993).

Several types of behavioral contracts have been found to be effective in increasing adherence to treatment programs. An early study of cocaine abusers by Anker and Crowley (1982) examined the use of written behavioral contracts that incorporated severe consequences for failure to stay abstinent. Consequences outlined in the contract included: loss of job, loss of professional license, or disclosure of the lapse to probation/parole officers with threat of returning to jail. The use of contracts was considered successful because not one of the participants who refused to use the behavioral contract remained in treatment the entire month while those who did contract continued in treatment and remained abstinent during treatment. These results could be attributed to self-selection, since only motivated participants agreed to sign a treatment contract. Nevertheless, the study suggested that contracts can positively impact immediate treatment outcomes.

### Developing the Employment Behavioral Contract

The employment behavioral contract is most useful as an individualized plan in which participants and their employment counselors commit to reaching measurable goals by following a specific employment plan. Both need to commit to following this plan in order for the plan to be successful.

It has been suggested that the moment of negotiating a behavioral contract is the crucial moment in the relationship (Selzer & Carsky, 1990). It is important that an employment counselor carefully develop the contract to reflect participant needs and employ effective strategies. When developing a behavioral contract, the employment counselor must meet structural objectives (Granvold, 1997). In other words, a contract should clearly state the problem being addressed, the reasons the problems are being addressed (the antecedents), and the areas of change. Contract elements should include:

- A clear and detailed description of assignments and/or expectations.
- Positive reinforcement gained if the assignment is completed.
- Consequence for failure to complete or approximate the assignment.
- Specific ways that the contracted response is to be observed, measured, or recorded.
- Immediate rewards and consequences after the completed task.

As part of this negotiation, discuss any obstacles that might interfere with the participant's full participation. Help the participant to find resources or solutions to anything that would pose a barrier to participation. With this discussion you are moving into the next phase of Motivational Counseling in which you will be fostering the participant's sense of self-efficacy and acting as a counselor to assist the participant in accessing solutions to those problems that pose a threat to employment.

Due to the design and purpose of this employment intervention, participants should put only things they can actually change in their contract. For example, participants have control over applying for another job if one refuses to hire them, but they do not have control over changing their criminal record. The contract also needs to be worded to bolster the self-efficacy of the participant. For example, participants may feel more overwhelmed if they choose an outcome such as "go to college" or "pass GED." In accordance with the employment counselor's role as a

facilitator for change, more effective wording may be “apply for college, John (employment counselor) will help with paperwork.” In this example, the participant has more control over applying to college versus being accepted to college, and can pull support from the employment counselor. Rewards for meeting these goals should be something which can be easily controlled or monitored. Intrinsic rewards are preferred when developing the contract. With the previous example, an intrinsic reward may be “if I apply to college, I may get in, and getting into college has always been a goal of mine.” Meeting this goal will naturally increase the participant’s self-efficacy.

This method works better when a non-adversarial relationship with the participant is maintained and while allowing participants to have full-ownership over their goals and accomplishments. It should be made clear that the contract can be renegotiated at any time if it is felt that the expectations or goals are no longer appropriate.

### Example Contract

The following is one example of an employment-based behavioral contract, specifically designed for a participant who does not have ready access to services. This participant has a long-term goal of finding a job he likes, and keeping it for at least one year because he decided that his past drug use and low commitment to employment have caused many problems in the past. The participant believes that finding and staying motivated is important to becoming a good employee. Identified short-term goals toward achieving the long-term goal are listed in the first column, followed by the name of the participants responsible for helping to carry out the goal and the dates it will be accomplished. In this example contract, you will notice that the rewards and consequences are intrinsic and relate to the long-term effect caused by each choice that is made.



**Figure 1.3 Example of a behavioral contract for one long term goal.**

BEHAVIORAL CONTRACT WITH JOHN ROBINSON

DATE: 01/01/98

LONG-TERM GOAL: Find a job I like, have good attendance, and keep the job for at least one year.

<b><i>Measurable short-term goals toward achieving LT goal</i></b>	<b><i>Persons Responsible</i></b>	<b><i>Target Date</i></b>	<b><i>Reward/Consequences</i></b>
<i>I will buy an alarm clock to help me get up on time each day.</i>	<i>Me, My girlfriend can help me hear it.</i>	<i>1/5/98 1/10/98</i>	<i>I will prove to myself that I can be a responsible employee.</i>
			<i>If I don't get the clock, I may miss work or be late &amp; may lose my job.</i>
<i>I will stay clean. I will go to NA or AA meetings at least 3 times a week.</i>	<i>Me. I will go to my sponsor for support.</i>	<i>Every Week</i>	<i>Each day I stay clean, I will feel better about myself and gain trust from my family.</i>
			<i>If I don't keep a schedule and make my recovery a priority, I may go to prison.</i>
<i>I will be on time for all appointments and learn to keep a schedule.</i>	<i>Me</i>	<i>Every Day</i>	<i>I will feel like I can accomplish things and be trustworthy. Life will be good! No more excuses.</i>
			<i>If I don't keep appointments, I may get lectured or go to jail.</i>
<i>I will continue to work on my GED review at least 30 minutes per day so I will be eligible for better jobs in the future.</i>	<i>Me</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>If I turn in my completed study guides, I will get help signing up and taking my GED exam. I also may get a better job in the future.</i>
			<i>I may miss out on good jobs if I don't get my GED.</i>

Individual signature  
Counselor signature

John Robinson  
Betty Jones

## Special Issues in Employment Behavioral Contracting

Short term contracting should begin with a small number of realistic and achievable goals. Moving incrementally is important for ongoing compliance (Linehan,1993). Contracts will probably fail if goals are unattainable or not understood. Employment counselors and supervisors need to frequently examine contracts for potential problems. According to Miller (1990), difficulties with formulating contracts develop when:

- Contracts are too restrictive or "parental."
- Contracts appear to be punishing or rejecting.
- The counselor is not vigilant in observing the contract.
- The therapeutic relationship is not established, or is estranged, and the contract becomes a source of resistance.
- The contract is too rigid, does not allow for participant determination, or does not include participant input.
- Counselor counter-transference (anger, for example), is present (see also Selzer, Kernberg, Fibel, & Cherbuliez, 1987).
- The participant does not have the skills to carry out the contract (skills training should be part of the session).
- Contracts are too vague, or do not have appropriate contingencies.
- Individuals do not "buy into" the contract, although they appear willing to comply.

Some employment counselors worry that developing positive reinforcers with individuals will be next to impossible because of the limited number of "rewards" available in non-urban communities, e.g., movies, restaurants, shopping malls, etc. Others are concerned that developing reinforcers is a form of "bribery" which will send the wrong message to the participant.

It is important to remember that positive reinforcers are a short-term approach to increasing the frequency of targeted behaviors. Reinforcers give the participant time to try new behaviors, get rewarded for their efforts, and begin to experience the pleasure of these new behaviors. If this intervention is successful, the participant will begin to develop the new behaviors as "habits," making external reinforcement eventually unnecessary. Reinforcers sustain the participant through the difficult process of change.

It is rarely necessary to "dream up" some super reward system to reward participants when they have fulfilled the contract. In fact, the best way to develop a list of positive reinforcers is to elicit them from the participant. Many individuals have simple desires that can be developed into positive reinforcers. Here is a list of reinforcers that are appropriate for employment contracting.

- Earning paid "days off" for sickness or vacation time—*a great reward for job stability.*
- An afternoon trip to a favorite place—*can be afforded if one moves up at work.*
- Long-distance telephone calls to family and friends—*can be afforded with stable work and money-management practices.*

- Being taught a new skill—*employers who see a good worker are more willing to provide training.*

Many participants are already receiving rewards from others with no expectations for behavior change. The employment counselor should explicitly identify these as rewards and link continuation of these to the target behaviors in the contract. For example, one participant was receiving free room and board from an aunt who was supporting her recovery process. The employment counselor identified "room and board" as a valuable reward that would continue to be delivered as long as the participant participated in treatment. An aunt agreed to continue to provide this and other financial support for the participant's children for the treatment period.

### **Thought Mapping: Organizing Thoughts and Behaviors**

“Thought Mapping” is a way of helping individuals learn from their experiences by organizing their personal thoughts (cognitions) and behaviors visually like a road map. All of us store and retrieve information through relationships. Our experiences with people, situations, and events are linked to one another through associations. This is why a new experience that is similar to an old experience can trigger a flood of memories that are linked by association. These experiences and their links form a complex map of experience that we rely on for interpreting, learning, and growing. When we attempt to communicate to another person some aspect of our own experience we are really communicating some piece of this complex map. If the other person has experiences and an internal map that is similar to our own, that communication can take place far more easily and with less risk of misunderstanding. If, on the other hand, that person's experience is very different than our own or if their internal map has very different links, then it becomes much more difficult to communicate and there is a much greater chance of being misunderstood.

Thought Mapping focuses on these internal and unconscious processes to make them external and conscious. In doing this we can help participants visually represent the pathways that lead to either constructive or destructive behaviors. The connections between action or inaction and reward or consequence, such as those in behavioral contracting, become clearer. As participants become more aware of this process, they can assume more responsibility for their behavior, their employment, and their lives, and then can make choices about how they will think, feel, decide, and behave.

Participants in early recovery frequently have problems with understanding, learning, and managing abstract notions (Grant, Adams, Carlin, & Rennick, 1997; Meek, Clark, & Solana, 1989; Czurchry, Dansereau, Dees, & Simpson, 1994). Thought Mapping has been an effective way of assisting participants in early recovery to overcome cognitive deficits (Knight, Dansereau, Joe, & Simpson, 1994). Thought Mapping has been found to be effective with cocaine abusers (Joe, Dansereau, & Simpson, 1994), individuals with attention deficit problems (Czurchry, et al., 1994), and individuals with little education (Pitre, Dansereau, & Joe, 1996). In fact, the overlap of population characteristics and the population with which thought mapping is most effective – those with lower literacy, lower verbal skills, and less education – suggests that incorporating thought mapping into social skills sessions would facilitate behavior change.

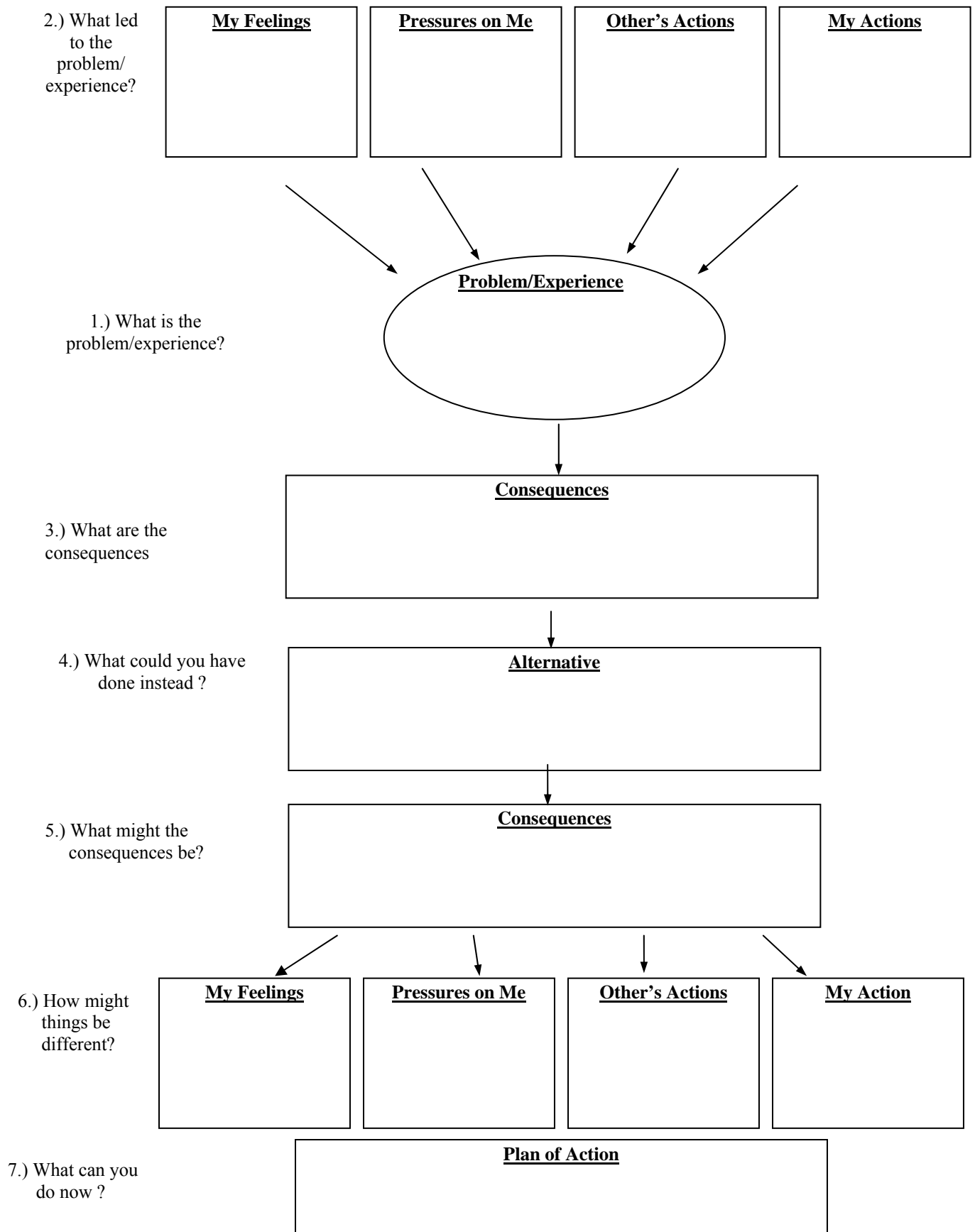
The main purpose of thought mapping is to help each participant to personally understand their thoughts and behavior so they can identify their own individual problem solving strategies. Specifically, thought mapping is used to help: (1) problem recognition—understanding how drug use is related to other behaviors like employment (pre-contemplation stage); (2) problem identification—specifically those circumstances, feelings, and values which contribute to drug use and other behaviors (contemplation stage); (3) consider various solutions—identify behavioral options available for solving problems (contemplation stage); (4) select best alternative—make a choice of action based on a rational projection of probable outcomes associated behaviors (action stage); and, (5) assess the effectiveness of a solution—set criteria to determine whether specific behaviors can be successfully achieved to solve a problem (action stage) (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982 ).

Thought mapping is a way to “look at” and present information (Czuchry et al., 1994). This approach uses nodes – boxes and ovals – to represent feelings, thoughts, and actions. Links or lines are used to visually show relationships between nodes. For this project, the employment counselor and the participant will jointly complete a map by filling in personal concepts on the “thought map”.

Thought Mapping helps employment counselors ask questions about individuals’ experiences that assist the exploration of other experiences. The employment counselor then maps these experiences and the links between them to create a representation of the participants’ thoughts and behaviors. With this map, the participant can begin to see how some employment experiences are related to desirable outcomes while others to undesirable outcomes. This information can help participants in seeing, more clearly, where changes need to take place and why these changes are likely to be helpful.

An example of the map used in these sessions is presented as Figure 1.4.

**Figure 1.4 Thought Map**



## Using the Map

A thought map provides a personal and visual presentation of how problems can lead to desirable behavioral outcomes as well as undesirable outcomes using a problem solving approach. The map is used to help the participant focus clearly on linking his or her own actions with other actions, feelings, thoughts, and solution(s).

The following steps are used to guide participants through thought mapping:

### *Thought Map Preparation*

- Put a blank map on a clipboard or flipchart and use it as the focus for discussion—Figure 1.4. (This map is modified from Dansereau, Dees, Chatham, Boatler, & Simpson, 1993)
- Briefly introduce the thought mapping approach. Emphasize that mapping discussions should be as “straight forward” as possible to focus on specific problems, identified by the participant, that are related to their own behavior, by focusing on one problem at a time.
- With a thought map on a flipchart, folded in half with the top half of the map showing, begin the mapping, using the map in Figure 1.4. The top half of the map displays what has actually occurred. The bottom half examines what could be done differently in the future. Start by asking the participant about the specific problem he or she had which is related to the session.

### *Thought Map Procedures*

Write on the map the participant’s own problem/experience in the problem oval after asking question (1): “What is the problem/experience?”

Make sure to ask for the specific problem/experience related to the participant’s behavior.

Write on the map the participant’s feelings, pressures, other’s actions, and what led to the problem after asking question (2): “What led to the problem?”

Then ask: What were your feelings about the problem? (starting question for women)

What did others think about the problem?

What did others do about the problem?

What did you do about the problem? (starting question for men)

NOTE: Experience with this thought map by a number of individuals indicates that the intervention will be most effective if:

Men are first asked – What did you do about the problem? The participant’s actions—which is followed by what others thought and what others did about their problem and ending with the question—What were your feelings about the problem?

Women are first asked – What were your feelings about the problem?—which is followed by what others thought and what others did about their problem and ending with the question – What did you do about the problem? – Her actions.

Write on the map the consequences of the problem in the box after asking question (3):  
“What are the consequences of the problem,” OR “What happened to you?”

Unfold the paper on the flipchart so the participant can see the whole map. Tell the participant that he or she is now going to look at a positive solution to this same problem – something they could have done differently that would have had positive consequences. It is important to identify and distinguish between short and long-term consequences since they may be somewhat different. A short-term consequence may be fairly positive: getting right with the court and catching up on court related debt. The longer-term consequences may be getting a job with better stability and benefits so he is eligible for a wage assignment. Although take home pay may be less, the long-term benefits and money saved from having employer-provided health insurance and no fear of IRS trouble for getting paid “under the table” makes it worth it.

Write on the map in the box what the participant says they could have done differently that would have made a positive change in the consequences after asking question (4):  
“What could you have done instead, to make the situation better?”

Write on the map in the box the consequences of the “better choice” after asking question (5):  
“What are the consequences of this positive choice?”

Write on the map in the box, the participant’s feelings, pressures on them, other’s actions, and their actions after asking question (6):

“How will things be different as a result of your positive choice?”

These mirror the boxes at the top of the map but are now in response to the proposed alternative behavior.

9. Then ask: What might be your feelings about the solution? (starting question for women)  
What might others think about the solution?  
What might others do about the solution?  
What would you do about the solution? (starting question for men)

NOTE: Remember to start with the feelings for women and actions for men when discussing how things would be different.

10. Write on the map the specific things the participant says they can do to help solve the problem now that the participant has created one possible alternative solution. This is a feasible, improved plan of action.

- Remember to start with the problem, then the things that led to the problem, followed by the consequences and choices for solving the problem. Encourage the participant to discuss a specific problem related to their own employment. When the participant talks about their problem behaviors, discuss the problem behavior by filling in the blanks on the map as the participant talks.
- Make sure enough time is allowed to reinforce the process. Point out that thought mapping is important before solving problems. Emphasize that most of the time there are several ways to deal with a problem. Make sure that the participant hears the message that a small amount of

time thinking about the consequences of their behavior can often avoid problems getting bigger.

Ask if he/she has any questions or comments?

Example Thought Map: The following is an example of a thought map based group discussion with a participant facing the problem/experience of working a cash-paying job. Notice that the employment counselor is using skills such as active listening and reflection when interacting with participants. See Figure 1.5 for a completed thought map based on this discussion.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** Does any one have a problem or experience that they're willing to talk about in the group?

**Participant 1:** My boss does not take taxes out and I am supposed to pay them on my own but he told me not to because it would draw attention to him.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** That is a serious problem. What kinds of things led up to that?

**Participant 1:** Well, I needed money. This guy does not check records and doesn't really care as long as I do the work. He also will pick me up and take me to jobs. He pays \$8.00 per hour cash. I did not think about this being a problem until I heard the judge talk to someone else about paying their own taxes.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** So this problem is getting bigger and you are not sure how to make it better.

**Participant 1:** Yeah, I know I need a job that takes out taxes but that is not enough to live on. Besides, they end up taking all of my tax return money for child support arrearage, fines, and restitution.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** So, you are pretty far behind on these obligations. Are you making efforts to catch up on these now?

**Participant 1:** Yeah, I am very behind and it is not fair. I have not even seen the kids and my co-defendants have not paid their part. I feel I deserve things for me now. I have a new girlfriend and a baby on the way and I need to take care of them, not things from the past.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** Basically, you want all this to go away. Tell me though, do you believe that things are likely to change based on decisions you are making at this time.

**Participant 1:** Not really. It just makes me mad that I can't get ahead. I want to have things go my way for once.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** Let's make sure I get this. You want to take care of your girlfriend and your new baby. You need a certain amount of money to make this possible. You are working for cash but realize that this is creating more problems and you want to figure out a way to dig yourself out of this hole.

**Participant 1:** Yeah that's about right.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** Let me ask you what kinds of things in you, like feelings, pressures, and values influenced your behavior.

**Participant 1:** Well, I want to be a success. All my life I have tried to get people to understand that I am trying to be responsible but life keeps me down. If I didn't have bad luck, I'd have no luck at all.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** So you would like to learn ways to make different decisions so your luck will change.

**Participant 2:** He can say to hell with every one and leave town.



**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** OK, (to Participant 1) is that something you would consider doing?

**Participant 1:** Not really. I am not a quitter. I have my girlfriend and we are having a baby. I am a family man now for real.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** So you are ready to make some changes.

**Participant 4:** You need a job with some benefits for real but I don't blame you for not wanting to pay child support. My baby's momma set me up like that for real. I was giving her money but she was getting a medical card and money from the state so I am the one that has to pay it back or go to jail. She has a new dude she is living with and everything.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** There are many things we are faced with that do not seem fair at all. You mentioned benefits though, how could having benefits help this situation get better?

**Participant 1:** I could handle some benefits. When you have health insurance from a job you don't have to worry about anything. Besides, I know this new kid is going to cost us because my girlfriend has a medical card for that too.

**Participant 3:** He could get a job that takes out taxes, set up a wage assignment to catch up, then set aside money, like in a payroll savings plan and keep a job to avoid future problems.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** How's that?

**Participant 1:** Sounds all right. I just am so behind and don't really know how to begin to catch up.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** Getting started can be difficult but where do you think you could begin?

**Participant 5:** He could ask around about openings at places that offer benefits and take out taxes.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** Does that sound reasonable?

**Participant 3:** I know my life has gotten much easier since I took a job that takes out taxes. Besides, when there is a wage assignment, it shows on your check and you don't have to worry about keeping up with receipts or not getting credit for money you have paid. I keep good records now. I know where my money goes.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** It sounds like you feel in control of this situation now.

**Participant 1:** I could not imagine how that would feel.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** It is difficult to imagine success at something that is unfamiliar to you. Did you (Participant 3) feel this way before you got started?

**Participant 3:** Definitely but I am not going back. I make sure to remind myself what it was like before. I never want to have to worry about taxes or how to pay for a doctor visit, or going to prison because I am behind on child support. I have worked too hard to let that happen. I just decided to accept help from anyone willing to listen and make suggestions.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** So what now?

**Participant 1:** I just need to do it. I will get a job that takes out taxes and offers benefits. That will prevent so many future problems with the new baby and all. Otherwise, I will be in debt forever and not have anything to show for life.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** Any ideas on where to find that job?

**Participant 1:** I will make a list of employers I know that offer benefits and people I know with employers who work with their program requirements and criminal histories. I also need to update my resume.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** So you have a plan. Is there any specific help you need to get

started?

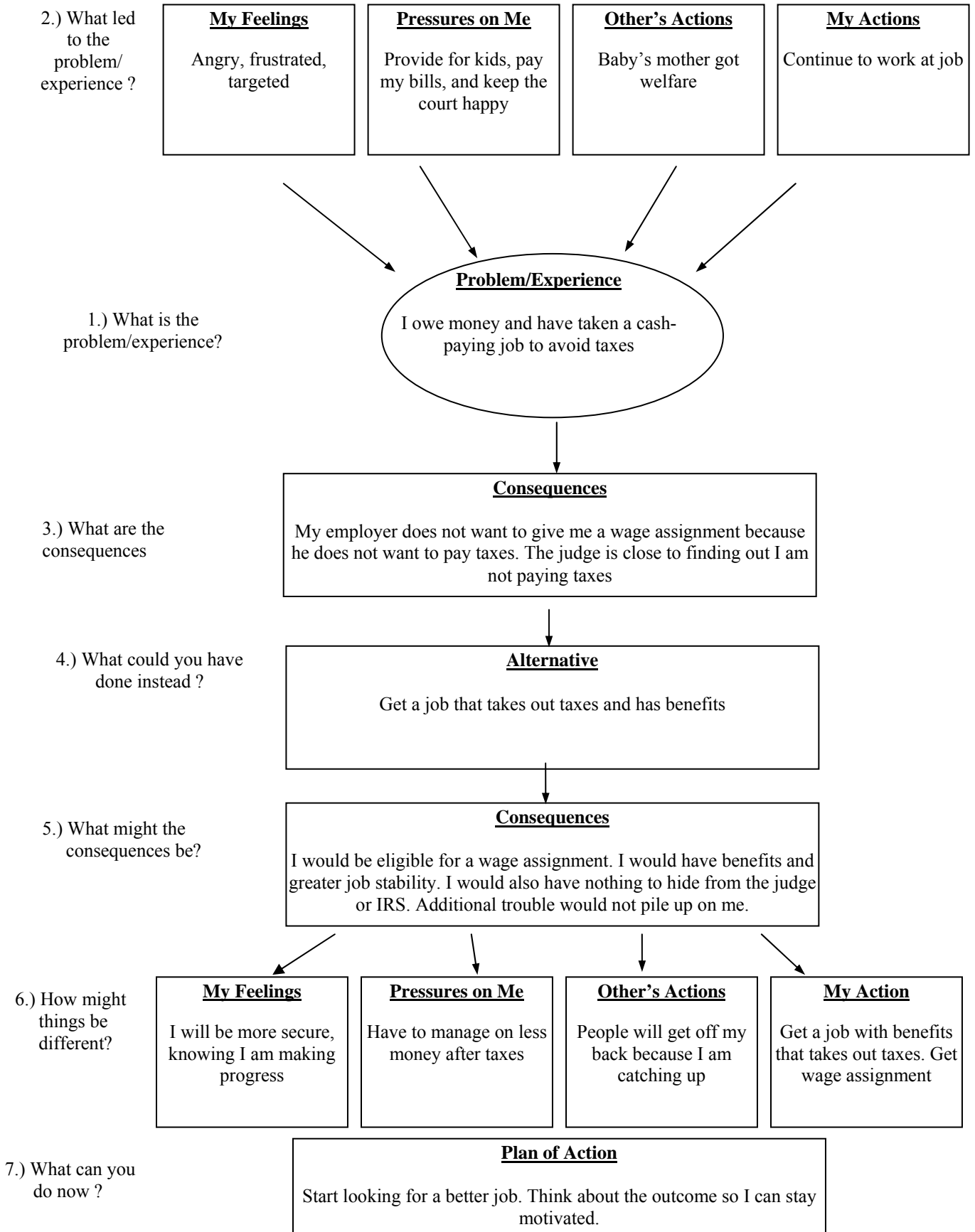
**Participant 1:** I need help with a resume but I feel much better just knowing what direction to go.

**EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR:** Great we can get to work after group today.

**Participant 1:** I can't believe now that problem seemed so difficult. I tend to make things much more difficult than they are.

After this discussion, the employment counselor may introduce the thought mapping process to the group. As the employment counselor reviews and organizes information from the group discussion, he can illustrate relationships between certain behaviors and consequences using the thought map. The purpose of thought mapping is not only to help the individual think about a specific problem, but to learn the process of effective problem-solving. Some people will need to work through several maps in order to figure out what might be a productive course of action. By patiently allowing the participant to proceed in such a manner, the employment counselor is helping the participant to learn an important new skill through repetition and practice.

**Figure 1.5: Group Discussion Thought Map**



## Structured Stories

Storytelling has been called one of the building blocks of culture, much like manufactured tools and cave painting (Schank, 1990). Storytelling is not simply entertaining. It enhances both individual and group survival by improving memory and recall, allowing an efficient means of communicating and retaining large amounts of information from generation to generation. Storytelling also helped our ancestors' select effective actions to project from the past into the future (Rush, 1996). Just as language is related to the structure of the human mind (Chomski, 1957; 1968), storytelling is related to the structure of language. Language is a symbolic representation of experience and storytelling is a representation of the relationships within that experience. Storytelling is a surprisingly sophisticated information processing tool.

Storytelling is so much a part of our lives that we seldom think of it as something separate. If you ask a friend or acquaintance that you have not seen for some time how things have been, they will tell you at least one, if not several stories. If you go into a bookstore, you find shelves filled with stories. Even books that are labeled as technical or "how-to" contain some stories. If you decide you want passive entertainment, you will probably see stories on a television or movie screen. If you are a member of a self-help fellowship, such as AA, you go to meetings to share stories about what happened and what things are like now. If you are an attentive parent, storytelling is one of the earliest activities you share with your children. Stories are a pervasive part of our lives.

There is something special about stories and storytelling that commands attention and stimulates understanding. The most memorable part of a political speech is often a story told to gain support and agreement. Even the most disruptive student in a classroom will usually settle down when the teacher reads or tells a story. The stories of mythic or national heroes are recounted time and again, often annually. Perhaps this is because stories and storytelling can involve us more than abstractions. Stories engage both cognition and affect in a uniquely powerful fashion that can make abstract realities accessible. Perhaps this is why spiritual teachers have used stories to communicate religious and moral information.

When telling a story, we express our understanding of the meaning and significance of the relationships between events. Thus, storytelling is an interpretive activity. When we tell personal stories, we are self-exploring which can lead to insight into our behavior. If these are shared experiences they can stimulate similar thoughts in others. By hearing other stories, we can increase insight into our own behavior, as well as recognize that our behavior is not unique or isolated. Sharing common experiences can create a positive perspective. This is the process that the founders of self-help groups instinctually discovered as helpful in changing behaviors. Further, if we change the way we tell a story, by modifying how we respond to specific experiences, we may create new behavioral possibilities in responding to those same experiences in our life. This is a kind of behavioral rehearsal that allows us to "try a new behavior."

Employment counselors often use structured story telling as a way to increase both insight and the awareness of the connections between behaviors and consequences. This can occur in both the story teller and the other group members. When using structured storytelling, the employment counselor should ensure that each story is presented in a way that illustrates the kinds of situations a specific social skill is meant to address. Counselors should also guide

participants in understanding the relationship between a specific behavioral choice, the feelings or thoughts, as well as the consequences. Employment counselors also assist others to recognize that there are other behavioral choices, which may be more or less desirable. Recognizing these choices can help to use the story as a framework for exploring and practicing employment choices.

Using storytelling includes a brief introduction after which each participant is asked if they have any personal stories related to the topic. In some groups, participants respond with relevant stories while in other groups, participants are not able to tell their story. For situations when participants may be reluctant to volunteer stories or for those situations when the employment counselor feels it best to model storytelling, relevant stories are included. The object is to engage rather than coerce a participant to share stories. It is not necessary for everyone tell a story but to share experiences. The role of the employment counselor is to guide the process.

This process also involves modeling. The employment counselor presents not only the story narrative, but also the structure. This structure helps everyone frame their own stories. Employment counselors should familiarize themselves with these stories so they can be told in an engaging way. The role of the employment counselor is to model storytelling, which precludes using a written text. Stories should be told in a straightforward manner to be engaging.

In some social skills training sessions, the employment counselor is asked to use stories to assist participants in gaining insights into their behaviors. This process may involve comparisons of stories on a common topic or may involve a thought map. In other sessions, the employment counselor asks participants to modify their stories by inserting a different behavior and projecting a probable outcome. In both cases, the employment counselor helps participants to explore how their past behavior might be different and more successful in the future. Structured storytelling becomes a method for a participant to explore a range of possible choices and a safe place for behavioral rehearsal of new behaviors.

Employment counselors also often use structured story telling to help create a thought map for a certain employment problem or experience. For example, if a participant tells a story about being fired from a job for tardiness, a thought map can be used to explore alternative actions to being habitually tardy. A thought map can help make these lucid story connections between behavior and consequence more clear.

### **Employment Strengths-Based Case Management**

In order to help participants reach their employment goals, employment counselors work to bolster current strengths participants may have, and work to create new ones. This occurs through the process of case management. The strengths-based case management approach has shown improved outcomes for employability, retention in treatment, and reduced drug use through retention in treatment (Siegal, Rapp, Kelliher, Fisher, Wagner, & Cole, 1995). Strengths-based case management has been used with both female (Brindis & Theidon, 1997) and male substance abusers (Siegal et al, 1995). The success of this approach rests on a valid, careful elicitation of the participant's strengths in the context of their current situation and the participant's desires and aspirations. Kishardt (1992) has developed a format to guide the

employment counselor and participant through the **participant strengths assessment** process. This format is presented in Figure 1.6 and as a completed form in Figure 1.7. It focuses on factors related to Current Status, Desires/Aspirations, and Resources-Personal/Social in six areas (1) Daily Living Situation, (2) Financial, (3) Vocational/Educational, (4) Social Supports, (5) Health, and (6) Leisure/Recreational Supports.

The Strengths Based perspective for case management is based on six principles (Rapp, 1992, p.46):

1. The focus is on individual strengths rather than pathology.
2. The relationship is primary and essential.
3. Interventions are based on participant self-determination.
4. The community is viewed as an oasis of resources, not an obstacle.
5. Aggressive outreach is the preferred mode of intervention.
6. People suffering from disorders can continue to learn, grow and change.

The strengths perspective includes careful focus on a participant's needs and goals. It demands an open, creative attitude on the part of the employment counselor--not merely a knack for re-framing participant problems to make them more palatable. The result should be the enhanced individuality of the participant, the empowerment of the participant, and the development of a working partnership. This perspective melds the strengths of several models together by emphasizing the counselor-participant relationship, focusing on strengths, and viewing resources as attainable. Rapp (1992) admits that this is an extremely demanding agenda, especially when the participant's levels of functioning are unevenly or globally impaired.

By using a blank Strengths Assessment form, the employment counselor can help participants discover what resources they have to help address a pressing problem or concern. To complete a Strengths Assessment, the participant identifies what specific needs they currently have in six different areas: Daily Living Situation, Financial/Insurance, Vocational/Education, Social Supports, Health, and Leisure/Recreational Supports. The participant then decides what he or she would like to be different in each area, and what resources are available to them to make the desired changes. Although each of these areas may not seem to be related to employment, each of them do. Whether a participant has a steady income from a job connects to all areas of living. For example, if a participant does not have employment, they may be without health insurance and money to pursue recreational activities.

From these desired positive changes and available resources, the participant then decides what four changes are most important. If several needs are connected to employment, such as no health insurance, inability to make rent payments, and inability to afford nutritious food, a priority may be to find employment or the skills needed to obtain employment. Figure 1.6 provides you with a blank assessment. Figure 1.7 is an example of similar information on a completed Strengths Assessment.



**Figure 1.7 Example Strengths Assessment (Adapted from Kishardt, 1992).**

Individual Name *John Robinson*

Counselor *Betty Jones*

Date *01/05/98*

<b>CURRENT STATUS:</b> What is going on today? What is available now?	<b>PARTICIPANT DESIRES ASPIRATIONS:</b> What do I want?	<b>RESOURCES, PERSONAL &amp; SOCIAL:</b> What have I used in the past?
<i>Housing is ok, but I wish I lived closer to town. Flood season is a problem. No car right now.</i>	<b>DAILY LIVING SITUATION</b> (housing, basic needs). <i>I need to look for a new place for Mary and me.</i>	<i>My sister and Uncle Bill have driven me to work in the past (when I was sober). They might help me to get a new job.</i>
<i>Mary has a decent job, but money is short. I lost my last job. Someone said I need a GED.</i>	<b>FINANCIAL/INSURANCE</b> I need an income—at least \$7.00 an hour.	<i>Counselor said she would help me talk with job people to look for a job</i>
<i>I can farm and weld and work on vehicles. But I hate work by the day places.</i>	<b>EMPLOYMENT</b> I need a job, any job right now.	<i>I can check again at the county high school about GED. My counselor said maybe Voc-Rehab</i>
<i>My wife, Mary the most. Sue (sister), Uncle Bill, some of my mother's people.</i>	<b>SOCIAL SUPPORT</b> I have a lot of good people who help me. I want to learn to help myself more.	<i>They are real glad about my coming for help for my problem. They might help me with my parents and other kin</i>
<i>High blood pressure-real bad nerves.</i>	<b>HEALTH</b> I need to take good care of myself.	<i>Take medication Dr. Combs gave me.</i>
<i>I used to go fishing. Spend time with Mary again.</i>	<b>LEISURE/RECREATIONAL SUPPORTS</b> May take up a hobby Mary and I can do together.	<i>Used drug and alcohol for this, but I just can't anymore. I'd like to have fun again and feel good around people.</i>

WHAT ARE MY PRIORITIES?

1. *Quit drugs and alcohol*
2. *Attend treatment*
3. *Find a better job*
4. *Get back with family*

<b>EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR COMMENTS</b> <i>John seems very committed to making changes but needs support to reach priorities. I will help with this and talk with some of his folks too.</i>	<b>PARTICIPANT COMMENTS</b> <i>I need help doing this but want to. I will work with Miss Betty.</i>
<b>EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR SIGNATURE</b> <i>Betty Jones</i>	<b>PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE</b> <i>John Robinson</i>



## **Social Skills Training**

Social skills training focuses on improving the interpersonal capabilities of the client. These skills are addressed in several sessions in this manual with practice exercises. Social skills training, which is grounded in cognitive-behavioral theory, stresses the integration of new skills within interpersonal thinking.

Why are the ideas behind behavioral and cognitive theory important to employment counselors working with drug and alcohol dependent clients? (Monti, Abrams, Kadden, & Cooney, 1989) explains the rationale for using social skills training:

The central tenet of the coping skills approach ... is that through a variety of learning techniques (behavioral rehearsal, modeling, cognitive restructuring, didactic instruction), individuals and their social networks can be taught to use alternative methods of coping with demands of living without using maladaptive addictive substances such as alcohol (p. 1).

In order to use social skills training in groups, the employment counselor must carefully assess the cognitive abilities of the group--especially noting which group members might have more difficulty with written materials or graphics. Certain groups might require a slower pace than others. Although the group process relies on verbal skills, reading and writing activities are also incorporated into sessions.

### Practice Exercises

While the experience of learning new skills during the social skills group sessions is critical, the experience of practicing these skills outside the group is important. A central principle of cognitive-behavioral therapy is that skill acquisition is retained primarily by behavioral repetition. Practice helps the client "generalize" the skill to settings outside of group, in their everyday settings.

Group practice exercises focus on one or two skills introduced during each group. Clients are given a reminder sheet which "cues" the specific behavior for the client to practice.

There are several approaches the employment counselor can use to encourage clients to complete exercises:

1. Use the term "practice;" avoid the term "homework." Practice allows a number of non-academic analogies (e.g., sports, music, crafts).
2. Take time during the group to explain the practice exercise. Give the reason for the exercise and answer questions.
3. Ask group members to develop reasons why they might not complete the exercise. Join them in a discussion of how such obstacles can be overcome. Generate pragmatic strategies.

4. Review practice exercises from the previous session at the beginning of each group session. Avoid the teacher-student dynamic.
5. Praise completed assignments. Praise all approximations to completion and encourage completion. Discuss reasons for not completing with clients who did not try the exercise. Monti and colleagues (1989) recommends that the use of material rewards for success be avoided; the key is to let clients who do not work on the practice exercises "learn" that completers receive praise.

## **Pre-Intervention Individual Sessions**

Pre-Intervention Individual Sessions are used to familiarize participants with the employment intervention and gather information needed to help participants obtain, maintain, and upgrade employment. These sessions are designed to be one-on-one in order to build rapport with participants before they enter an employment group. Much of the information covered in each pre-intervention session will be used to help the participants identify strengths and resources to use throughout the intervention. This information will include a detailed job history and level of employment readiness. The participant will also be introduced to several of the techniques to be used in this manual including: thought mapping, strengths assessment, and behavioral contracting. These techniques will be used throughout the group sessions.

## **PRE-INTERVENTION INDIVIDUAL SESSION ONE: EMPLOYMENT ASSESSMENT**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Clients*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

Identifying Personal Strengths

Organizing Employment History

Evaluating Job Readiness

Collecting Additional Employment Information

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Pre-Intervention Session 1    Handout 1    YOUR EMPLOYMENT SKILLS

Pre-Intervention Session 1    Handout 2    PERSONAL DATA SHEET

Pre-intervention Session 1    Handout 3    JOB READINESS CHECKLIST

Pre-Intervention Session 1    Handout 4    ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT  
INFORMATION

## **Pre-Intervention Individual Session One: Employment Assessment**

### Message to Employment Counselor

The goal of this first individual session is to collect participant information. This is accomplished by using a strengths-based model of assessment (Rapp, 1992). As described previously, this model focuses on finding strengths and skills that participants already possess to increase their chances of finding a job. This information will help participants present their past while focusing on skills in later sessions. The strengths-based perspective is facilitated by motivational interviewing skills because it encourages participants to view skills and strengths as characteristics they can work to acquire or build through self-motivated change. This session will also help participants develop vocational goals, objectives, and identify barriers to be overcome in order to achieve them and identify strategies to resolve problems and to achieve established goals and objectives. The employment counselor will help participants complete a personal data worksheet to help identify personal strengths, as well as research identified employment issues for the participant.

This session also focuses on building rapport to identify strengths and weaknesses. The first individual session is important to initiate a relationship and develop rapport with the participant. Therefore, it is important to not lecture or “talk above” participants. Participants will want to know how you are going to help them and how time with you will be important for them. You will learn what intimidates them, what makes them angry, and factors contributing to their past failures. You will also discover what motivates them, makes them happy, and makes them feel a sense of accomplishment.

### Message to Participants:

“The purpose of individual sessions is to give you an idea of how you can use this program to reach your employment goals. This program is designed to help you obtain a job, maintain that job, and upgrade to a different job. Finding the job you want may take longer than the week or two that you might expect. This is why we will be developing short-term employment goals and a long-term plan for finding a job that fits your employment goals. The important thing will be that you commit to only the things that will help you reach your goal. This is why open communication is important. For example--if you don't tell me you are not happy with the way things are going, I will not know.”

### Session Objectives:

- Establish rapport with participants
- Help participants understand the benefits of participating in this employment intervention
- Help participants identify personal strengths and needs related to the workplace
- Help participants develop an organized list of work history and education to begin the employment assessment
- Evaluate participants' job readiness

## Materials:

Handout 1	“Your Employment Skills”
Handout 2	“Personal Data Sheet”
Handout 3	“Job Readiness Checklist” Initial Assessment Form (to be filled out by employment counselor)
Handout 4	Additional Employment Information
Folder	(for each participant)

## Employment Counselor’s Session Introduction:

“The goal of this employment intervention is to help you look for a job, to keep a job, and to search for and get a better job. We will be discussing ways in which this program will help you prepare to begin your job search.”

“First, I would like to say that I am really glad that you are here and to explain to you a little about how I can help you to meet your employment goals. These employment sessions will focus on employment and will help you find a job that you like, keep that job, and, when you are ready, find a better job; something that you would like to continue to do for a long time.”

“This time we are spending together is for each of us to learn more about your employment goals and exactly how this program will help you. Feel free to tell me if there is something that you don’t understand or see as important.”

“My goal is to help you identify your employment needs and to help you plan your employment future. In order to do that, we will need to find answers to the following questions:”

- Do you have a specific employment goal?
- How optimistic or pessimistic are you about your ability to achieve your employment goal?
- Are you interested in employment training? If so, what specific type?
- Will your family and friends support the pursuit of your employment goal?
- Who will provide training and funding?
- What skills do you have that will help you find a job that fits your needs?

“These are the questions we will be working to answer over the next few weeks individually, and then together in group. The place we are going to start with this session is focusing on your strengths and skills, organizing your personal work history, and determining how ready you are to begin work.”

Distribute a folder to participant. Suggest participants keep worksheets in the folder and bring it weekly. Explain that throughout the intervention, they will likely refer back to worksheets that have been filled out in previous weeks.

## **Identifying Personal Strengths**

“I would like for you to begin thinking of some of your strengths and how these strengths may apply to you and the workplace. This can be considered a beginning list of strengths and skills. Later sessions will help you discover more strengths and skills you may not have known you had.”

“When thinking about your strengths it is important to be honest with yourself. Maybe it would help to think of positive things that co-workers or former employers have said about your work. For example, are you reliable? trustworthy?”

Distribute Handout 1: “Your Employment Skills” and discuss with the participant what types of skills he can identify. The employment counselor should provide examples if the participant seems unable to identify skills. Have participants fill out the list with personal characteristics or skills they feel would help them be considered a "good worker" by a boss. After explaining the three types of skills listed on the handout, encourage participants to give personal examples of each type of skill. They should be invited to share their personal strengths in the session.

## **Organizing Employment History**

“In later sessions we will begin filling out job applications and developing resumes. It is easier to complete these if you have all of your employment information organized. Also, if we are able to view your whole employment history, we may be able to identify more strengths or anticipate problem areas, such as lack of specific training.”

Distribute Handout 2: Personal Data Sheet and help participants fill in the information. Remind participants to keep this sheet as they will be adding to it and using it in later sessions. This will likely be useful when completing job applications and designing resumes.

## **Evaluating Job Readiness**

“Before applying for jobs, there are several areas we need to evaluate to decide if you are ready to begin working. For example, in order to find a job, you will need personal identification. Also, to get to work, you need some type of transportation.”

Distribute Handout 3: “Job Readiness Checklist.” Have participants complete this form to determine if the participant has the necessities to begin the job search.

## **Collecting Additional Employment Information**

“Although we have collected several pieces of information about your employment history, it may be helpful for me to know some additional information to help you with your employment concerns.”

Use Handout 4: “Additional Employment Information” and complete it based upon responses from participants. You may not need to complete the whole form. However, collect as much

information as you believe you will need to help participants during the employment intervention. Once you collect the information, it may be helpful to assess the participant's readiness for employment using the end of the handout.

### **Closing Comments**

Even though filling out several pieces of paperwork may seem burdensome to participants, assure them that this work will pay off when looking for a job. Laying out participants' employment histories will allow both the employment counselor and participants find strengths and identify areas for improvement.



**Pre-Intervention Session 1: Handout 1**  
**YOUR EMPLOYMENT SKILLS**

**Job-Related Skills:** Skills needed for a specific job.

For example, an auto mechanic needs to know how to fix brakes, tune engines, and to make other auto repairs.

**Adaptive Skills:** Skills also called personality traits.

These skills help you get along in new situations. For example, are you enthusiastic? Straightforward? Considerate of others?

**Transferable Skills:** Skills you can use in many different jobs.

For example, good organizational skills or being good with your hands.

YOUR "GOOD WORKER" SKILLS	
1.	<hr/> <hr/>
2.	<hr/> <hr/>
3.	<hr/> <hr/>
4.	<hr/> <hr/>
5.	<hr/> <hr/>

**Pre-Intervention Session 1: Handout 2**  
**PERSONAL DATA SHEET**

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time at Present Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Days/Hours available: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Desired Salary Range: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional/Civic Organizations \_\_\_\_\_

Work Limitations \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY** (list most recent first, and back in chronological order)

Employer (MOST RECENT): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates employed: (mo./yr.) \_\_\_\_\_ to (mo./yr.) \_\_\_\_\_

Salary: beginning \_\_\_\_\_ to ending \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates employed: (mo./yr.) \_\_\_\_\_ to (mo./yr.) \_\_\_\_\_

Salary: beginning \_\_\_\_\_ to ending \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Duties: \_\_\_\_\_



Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates employed: (mo./yr.) \_\_\_\_\_ to (mo./yr.) \_\_\_\_\_

Salary: beginning \_\_\_\_\_ to ending \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

**SKILLS**

“What you are” skills”: (i.e., I am a good “people person”, I am dependable)

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“What you can do” skills: (Word processing, database management, carpentry skills)

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“What you know” skills: (Trained in statistical packages, certified in CPR, etc.)

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**MILITARY EXPERIENCE**

Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_

Dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Job Titles	Duties
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

Organizations	Duties/Responsibilities
_____	_____
_____	_____

**EDUCATION/TRAINING**

Education	Name & Address	Dates	Course of Study	Yrs/Hrs. Completed	GPA	Degree
High School						
College						
Other						

GED: \_\_\_\_\_ (date recorded) Location \_\_\_\_\_

Professional licenses/certifications: \_\_\_\_\_

**HONORS/AWARDS:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**REFERENCES:**

Name:

Employment:

Job Title:

Address:

Telephone:

How long have you known this person?

Name:

Employment:

Job Title:

Address:

Telephone:

How long have you known this person?:

Name:

Employment:

Job Title:

Address:

Telephone:

How long have you known this person?

Name:

Employment:

Job Title:

Address:

Telephone:

How long have you known this person?

**Pre-intervention Session 1: Handout 3**  
**JOB READINESS CHECKLIST**

	Y or N
1. Do you have a social security card?	
1a. Do you know where the local office is? How to request a new card?	
2. Do you have a copy of your birth certificate?	
2a. Do you know how to obtain one?	
3. Do you have a drivers license?	
3a. If not, do you know where to get one?	
4. Do you have a valid picture ID?	
4a. Do you know where to obtain a valid picture ID?	
5. Do you have legal authorization to work?	
5a. If not, what needs to be done to do that?	
6. Do you need any other documentation to work?	

**JOB READINESS CHECKLIST (CONT)**

7. Do you have a suit or dress clothes for your interview?	
8. Do you know where to look for jobs?	
9. Do you have any questions about the employment application procedure?	
10. Do you have any questions about the interviewing process?	
11. Do you have any questions about how to handle questions about your legal history (felony convictions)?	
12. Do you have any questions about what employers are looking for?	
13. Do you have reliable transportation? Have you thought about how you will get to and from a job?	
14. Do you have reliable childcare?	
15. Do you have a calendar or some reliable method of keeping track of your schedule?	
16. Do you have a reliable alarm clock?	
17. Do you know how to notify a supervisor if you are going to be late or not show up for work?	
18. Do you have a GED or High School Diploma?	



**Pre-Intervention Session 1: Handout 4**  
**ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Vocational Goals: \_\_\_\_\_

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1. Physical Strengths and limitations: (Indicate any problems below).

- Physical endurance
- Hand and finger dexterity
- Mobility
- Upper Body Strength
- Lower Body Strength
- Speech, hearing or sight

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Psychosocial strengths and limitations:

Adjustment to current situation (incarceration, following the program): \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you ever worry about finding for a job you like? \_\_\_\_\_

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Current emotional stability (Do you get sad or depressed? have nerves?) \_\_\_\_\_

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Effects of family/social environment (Do you get help from your family?) \_\_\_\_\_

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Current Legal Issues:

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3. Educational-vocational strengths and limitations related to participant's capacity to do the job:

- Educational skills (basic reading and math skills)
- Vocational skill level (current and potential)

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On the job preferences:

Do you prefer working with people or things?

Amount of personal responsibilities you prefer? Do you like making decisions on your own?

Type of work setting (in-doors, out-doors, office, laid-back) you prefer:

Do you like to create things or to figure out how to complete a task without instructions?

Do you prefer routine or variety on the job?

Which work hours do you prefer?

What is the minimum income you can live on?

How much physical work do you like to do on the job?

Are you interested in opportunities for advancement on the job?

Vocational area of interest: \_\_\_\_\_

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If unemployed, ask, Why? Reasons for unemployment: \_\_\_\_\_

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Job Acquisition or retention problems:

Number of jobs in past five years \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times fired \_\_\_\_\_

Number of times quit \_\_\_\_\_

If more than three, ask them to name some of the places they have worked during this period of time and list here:

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What do you think of when you think of “work” or “having a job”?

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#### 4. Special Considerations

Economic

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Transportation

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Housing

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Child care

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Child-support payments

---

If children, with whom are they living?

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Are there any aspects of your job that you must cope with on a regular basis?

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**Employment Counselor Assessment:**

1. Does the participant have a specific employment objective?

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2. Does the participant have more than one potential employment goal?

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3. How optimistic or pessimistic is the participant about his/her ability to achieve each vocational goal?

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4. Is the participant interested in employment training?

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What specific type? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How much support would you get for this goal? Would friends and family support of the goal?

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6. Services Needed to Achieve Employment Goal:

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**Possible services needed to reduce physical limitations for the job in question:**

- Prosthetics
- Orthoses
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy

Surgery

**General Medical**

Speech Therapy

**Services needed to remove or reduce psychosocial limitations for job in question:**

**Work Adjustment Training**

Personal Adjustment Training

Individual Psychotherapy

Group Therapy

Family Counseling

**Services needed to remove or reduce educational-vocational limitations for the job in question:**

**Remedial Reading Instruction**

Remedial Math Instruction

Vocational Training

Job seeking Skills Training

On-the-Job Training

**Services for special considerations:**

Supported Employment

Financial Maintenance

Transportation

Housing

Child-care Needs

Job Placement

**PRE-INTERVENTION INDIVIDUAL SESSION TWO: OBTAINING IMMEDIATE EMPLOYMENT**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Clients*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

The Basics to Completing a Job Application

The Basics to Interviewing

Closing Comments

## **Pre-Intervention Individual Session Two: Obtaining Immediate Employment**

### Message to the Employment Counselor:

An important component of this treatment program is employment. Being able to maintain employment demonstrates that one is self-sufficient and responsible. Therefore, it is important that participants obtain employment as soon as possible. It is also important for participants to get a job because it provides: income, responsibility, personal identity, and enhances the recovery process. Employment incorporates positive activities as well as learning how to incorporate structure into the participant's lives, including following a schedule, being on time, and proving to be reliable. This session will help participants practice filling out job applications and will provide practice for job interviews.

### Message to Participants:

“Drawing on your strengths and weaknesses, the purpose of this session is to help you get a job now. We are going to start by learning how to fill out a job application using a standard application. You will also learn some skills that we will discuss later in more detail. The idea now is for you to get some practice with the first steps of the job search including practice interviewing, talking about your involvement in treatment, and discussing job barriers that may exist for you.”

### Materials:

Copies of Employment Applications

### Session Objectives:

- Learn the basics of completing a job application professionally
- Practice completing job applications
- Learn the basics of successful interviewing
- Practice interview skills

### Employment Counselor's Session Introduction

“If you have not previously filled out a job application, this session will focus on helping you to do so. If you have previously filled out job applications, this session may provide you practice opportunities to complete a professional looking application. In later sessions, we will cover this in more detail. However, it is important to cover the basics now so that you can obtain a job, and an income as soon as possible.”

### **The Basics to Completing a Job Application**

“There are several key points to keep in mind when filling out a job application:”

- Use black ink
- Write clearly and legibly



- Do not leave blanks
- If you are not answering an item write “n/a” for “not applicable”
- Answer items honestly
- Be sure to provide references who will speak highly of you
- Don’t list references who you have contacted and asked them to be references
- Don’t be afraid to brag a little when you are listing skills
- Don’t “make up” information to make yourself look like a better applicant
- Take care of the application, making sure to not soil it with drinks or food

Provide participants with several applications from local businesses. Help them fill out each application, giving them feedback on how well they are filling it out.

### **The Basics to Interviewing**

“If the employer likes your application, she may call you in for an interview. During the interview, the employer is deciding whether or not you will be a good person to work with. Because of this, impressions are everything. The following suggestions may help you make a good impression with the employer:”

- Arrive on time
- Dress appropriately
  - No jeans or t-shirts
  - Men- Slacks or khaki pants, button down shirt or polo shirt, dress shoes
  - Women- Slacks, khaki pants, skirt and a blouse or a dress, dress shoes
  - No clothes which are short, tight, or too revealing
  - Wear clean clothes which are unwrinkled
- Shake hands with the employer
- Be polite and courteous
- Answer each question directly and honestly
- Discuss skills before presenting your criminal past
- Have several questions to ask the employer about the position
- Thank the employer for their time and consideration for the position

After discussing the previous tips with the participant, have him role-play several mock interview with you until he feels comfortable with his interviewing skills. Specifically practice presenting him past to an employer. Remind him that you will discuss these skills in more detail in future sessions if he still feels uncomfortable.

### **Closing Comments**

The goal of this session is to continue building rapport with the participants by working together towards a common employment goal. It is equally important that they feel supported and oriented to the employment intervention than be skilled at implementing the information in this session. Later sessions focus more exclusively on building skills when your relationship with participants is stronger.

**PRE-INTERVENTION INDIVIDUAL SESSION THREE: BEHAVIORAL CONTRACTING**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Clients*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

Reviewing an Example Behavioral Contract

Developing a Behavioral Contract

Closing Comments

**HANDOUTS**

Pre-Intervention Session 3    Handout 1    EXAMPLE BEHAVIORAL CONTRACT

Pre-Intervention Session 3    Handout 2    BLANK BEHAVIORAL CONTRACT

## **Pre-Intervention Individual Session Three: Behavioral Contracting**

### Message to the Employment Counselor:

A behavioral contract is a written agreement between the participant and employment counselor designed to secure commitment. The commitment here is to agree to take the steps necessary to gain employment. For a behavioral contract to be effective, both short term and long term goals need to be agreed upon. The participant also needs to accept responsibility for these goals, as well appropriate rewards and consequences should be consistently applied.

### Message to Participants:

“This session focuses on securing commitment between you and I to work towards your employment goals. Since we are both involved in improving your employment situation, we will each have responsibilities to each other to make this possible. We will spend this session using a behavioral contract to clearly define each of our roles in this employment intervention.”

### Session Objectives:

- Learn what a behavioral contract is
- Learn why behavioral contracting is important
- Develop a behavioral contract

### Materials:

Handout 1     Example Behavioral Contract  
Handout 2     Blank Behavioral Contract

### Employment Counselor’s Session Introduction:

“The behavioral contract is a written agreement that includes the goals you and I have discussed and the responsibilities of each of us during the contract period. You can also include family, friends, or significant others as a part of this contract. It is important that you include goals that are your own (not just to please others). A description of things that will be expected of you and others who are involved will be clearly stated in the contract. The rewards for completion, consequences for breaking the contract, specific ways that goals are to be observed, and immediate rewards or consequences after each task will also be included and enforced when you have reached a goal or failed to comply with a specific part of the contract. Please let me know now if there are any obstacles that you feel may interfere so you can work toward finding a solution or increasing your support system. This will increase your chances of success.”

The behavioral contract should specifically include what the participant should do and the support that will be provided by specific people. Talk about the contract like it is a behavioral plan rather than a list of obligations. The purpose of the contract is to specify the expectations of

each participant. It should be understood that contracts can be renegotiated when expectations or goals are not meeting the participant's needs. A behavioral contract should be presented to the participant as a serious but limited agreement that is designed to help him or her meet their stated goals. As part of this negotiation, discuss any obstacles that might interfere with the participant's full participation. Help each participant find resources or solutions to things that present barriers, such as hanging around with old friends who use or accepting a job where co-workers often use.

### **Reviewing an Example Behavioral Contract**

Distribute Handout 1: "Example Behavioral Contract." This contract was particularly designed for a participant who does not have access to some services. The employment counselor should introduce this example contract and elicit suggestions from the participant on possible solutions. Read the following story to the participant and review the behavioral contract which was developed by John and his employment counselor.

#### *John*

"John Robinson is a 46-year-old man who has four months of sobriety from alcohol and marijuana. He also has a history of depression and anxiety and has had eight jobs in the last five years. John's children don't talk to him much and told him that they don't have to listen to him. John's wife, Mary wants to make their marriage work and supports him, but she feels that John will not let her know what he is thinking or feeling. John is now on anti-depressant medication and is seeing a therapist. However, sometimes when he has a good day, John starts to feel that he no longer needs counseling or his medications. He has attended about 3 of every 4 scheduled counseling appointments and has been late for his job several times in the last month. This is the contract that John and his employment counselor developed (refer to Handout 1). What suggestions would you give John in order to help him be more successful?"

"John has the long-term goal of staying sober because he decided his drug use is interfering with his family relationships and his work performance."

"Identified short-term goals to achieve the long-term goal are listed in the first column, followed by the name of the participants responsible for helping to carry out the goal and the dates the goal will be accomplished. When choosing your goals and supports, please keep in mind the importance of choosing things that you have control over."

"Please note that in this example contract, free transportation to therapy and AA is given as a positive reinforcement, and paying for transportation a negative reinforcement in the case of relapse. However, your goals and reinforcements may or may not be the same."

## Developing a Behavioral Contract

When discussing a behavioral contract, the employment counselor works closely with participants to identify resources and unmet needs, as well as areas that can impact treatment participation. For example, the participant may need to solve transportation problems in order to obtain and/or maintain employment. At the same time, addressing that problem can also help the participant get to other appointments. The overall goal is to develop a contract using the participant's strengths to help get him or her employed. The more the participants are involved in developing strategies and choosing consequences, the more motivated participants will be to continue. Use the following steps to help participants make an effective behavioral contract:

- Prepare for developing the behavioral contract by doing the following:
  - Review assessment results
  - Identify problem areas
  - Identify possible resources
  
- Use Motivational Interviewing
  - Briefly review assessment results
  - Ask participants what they think are important
  
- Develop a Behavioral Contract
  - Focus on problem areas, resources, and strengths
  - Revise as needed to meet modified goals

Distribute Handout 2: “Blank Behavioral Contract” and complete the contract with the participant, eliciting input from him or her along the way.

Review the **behavioral contract**. Trouble-shoot for weak areas and make sure that each goal the participant develops is feasible. For example, if reliable transportation is an issue, make sure that the Behavioral Contract includes a back-up plan. It is always better to be proactive when it comes to behavioral planning. Ask lots of “what-if” questions and plan for times when things may not go exactly as planned.

## Closing Comments

This behavioral contract serves as a binding agreement between you and participant throughout the employment intervention. If you feel a participant's involvement waning, you might make an individual appointment with them to review the contract to help get them back on track.

**Pre-Intervention Session 3: Handout 1**  
**EXAMPLE BEHAVIORAL CONTRACT**

BEHAVIORAL CONTRACT WITH JOHN ROBINSON

DATE: 01/01/00

LONG-TERM GOAL (use a separate sheet for each long-term goal)

*I want to stay off drugs & alcohol because it is getting in the way of my family relationships.*

<b><i>Measurable short-term goals toward achieving LT goal</i></b>	<b><i>Persons Responsible</i></b>	<b><i>Target Date</i></b>	<b><i>Reward/Consequences</i></b>
<i>Attend weekly employment sessions.</i>	<i>Me, My counselor My sister, Sue</i>	<i>1/5 1/10</i>	<i>I will feel proud of myself and the people will have good things to say about me.</i>
<i>Attend AA meetings..</i>	<i>Me Uncle Bill</i>	<i>1/9 1/16</i>	<i>I feel better after I go to meetings.</i>
<i>Take prescription each morning and evening.</i>	<i>Me My wife, Mary</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>Mary will help me and we will work together.</i>
<i>Talk to wife every day about how I am doing at work.</i>	<i>Me My wife, Mary</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>If I give my wife attention she will not “nag” me. I will be happier and she will feel that she knows what is going on in my life.</i>
<i>I will be on time for all group sessions.</i>	<i>Me Counselor</i>	<i>1/6 1/11 1/13</i>	<i>My counselor will report this weekly to my probation officer. Stay in program and graduate.</i>
<i>Attend two "check-in" appointments with my counselor about my job.</i>	<i>Me Counselor</i>	<i>1/12 1/14</i>	<i>Will receive feedback on my job and get support for my efforts. Will get help connecting to employment services.</i>
<i>I will continue to work on my job each day.</i>	<i>Me Counselor</i>	<i>Daily</i>	<i>When I turn in my completed attendance, I can get help from my counselor. I also will feel good about myself—like I’ve done something.</i>

Individual signature  
 employment counselor signature

John Robinson  
Betty Jones

**Pre-Intervention Session 3: Handout 2  
EXAMPLE BEHAVIORAL CONTRACT**

BEHAVIORAL CONTRACT WITH: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

LONG-TERM GOAL (use a separate sheet for each long-term goal)

<i>Things I can do to reach my long-term goal.</i>	<i>Persons Responsible</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Reward/Consequences</i>

Individual signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**PRE-INTERVENTION INDIVIDUAL SESSION FOUR: ONGOING STRENGTHS CASE  
MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT ASSESSMENT THROUGHOUT THE  
INTERVENTION**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Clients*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

*Closing Comments*



## **Pre-Intervention Individual Session Four: Ongoing Strengths Case Management And Employment Assessment Throughout The Intervention**

### Message to the Employment Counselor:

The purpose of ongoing individual sessions is to help motivate participants and to establish specific goals. Case management continues with individual sessions to focus on employment issues.

Ongoing individual sessions are a significant part of the intervention because they help participants overcome employment obstacles and difficulties. The major goal of ongoing employment case management is to help the participant stay motivated to work. The employment counselor works closely with each participant to track compliance with the contract and to solve problems as they arise. It is important to reinforce a participant's successes immediately and consistently. This will likely enhance positive employment goals. Contracts will also be revised in the individual session as the participant's needs change.

### Message to the Participants:

“The purpose of our ongoing individual sessions is so you can discuss experiences and problems that you are having at work and to update your behavioral contract. It is very important to be open about the specific concerns or challenges you are facing with your job search or in the workplace so that problems can be corrected before they get out of hand. Remember that focusing on the negative or staying in a work environment where you are extremely uncomfortable may not create the best situation for your success. It is important that you view your life as a sober participant as a more rewarding than your life as a substance abuser. Doing so will increase the likelihood that you will be successful on the job and that you will not return to using.”

### Session Objectives:

- Continued monitoring of participants employment progress
- Revising and modifying behavioral contracts
- Continue building rapport with participants

### Materials:

Blank Behavioral Contracts as needed.

### Employment Counselor's Session Introduction:

A large portion of this and subsequent sessions will be “checking in” with participants to see how their employment search is going. The following steps are used in the individual sessions so goals can be consistently addressed:

1. At the beginning of the session use a *Motivational Interviewing* approach.

Ask: "How are things going for you at your job?"

*Note to employment counselor: Listen without criticizing and reflect back to the participant parts of what the participant says.*

If the participant has not attended group sessions, it is important to understand why and to focus firmly, but non-punitively, on changing that behavior. It is also important to track the participant's work attendance. Positively reinforce success and help the participant to overcome obstacles with praise.

2. Review the completed Strengths Assessment form with participants. Participants may report that external factors have been addressed so that things are going better in their lives and that they are able to work and participate in treatment. If they report otherwise, identify unmet needs and work with the participant to meet them. This review will help the participant as well as the employment counselor to recall what resources and areas of needs were addressed and what needs to be done. The contract is reviewed and appropriately revised. At this point possible solutions can be explored or a thought map can be used to layout the problem and analyze various alternatives.

3. The participant might identify (or the employment counselor might note) internal factors that are impeding employment, or were triggered by treatment. The employment counselor will be aware of the participant's assessment and history. At the point of problem identification, the employment counselor should listen carefully and validate the participant's concerns and emotions. To structure potential solutions and/or approaches to these problems, the employment counselor should use a thought map to identify the problem and to explore historical factors shaping the problems and various ways to solve the problems.

4. Review the employment behavioral contract with the participant.

Check to ensure the following are completed:

- Conditions from the previous week have been reinforced and/or addressed after review.
- Goals and behaviors have been updated and revised to reflect the current session. Be sure consequences have been stipulated for each behavior.
- The participant understands their contract. Explore possible obstacles to successful contract execution and develop contingency plans to address obstacles.

### **Closing Comments**

Although the group sessions will begin, the employment counselor should still make himself available to participants for individual sessions as needed throughout the employment intervention. For some participants, learning new approaches to the job search can be very difficult and will require your patience and genuine support to help them succeed.

## Introduction to the Group Sessions

This section of the manual includes sixteen group sessions. Smaller groups are generally more conducive to participant involvement and engagement. Consequently, five to ten participants per group is suggested. Each session begins with a message to the employment counselor and a message to be presented to the participants which explains the session content. The sessions include clear objectives for each session. The employment counselor should be prepared with the materials listed. The materials needed for each session are usually copies of the handouts provided in the manual. Since handouts may be referred to in future sessions, the employment counselor should encourage participants to maintain a folder of handouts for easy reference.

This employment intervention, which is grounded in established job readiness and life skill training approaches, was developed by the University of Kentucky team. Three established interventions were modified and are incorporated into the employment intervention and manual: the Ex-Inmates Guide to Successful Employment (Sull, 1998), Job Readiness Activity (State of Kentucky, 1995), and Offender Employment Specialist Manual (National Institute of Corrections; NIC, 1997). In addition, clinical approaches used with substance-using clients are incorporated (Leukefeld, Godlaski, Clark, Brown, & Hays, 2000), strengths-based case management (Siegal, Fisher, Rapp, Kelliher., Wagner, O'Brien, & Cole, 1996), and motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 1991).

Focus groups were used in the developmental phases of the employment intervention. The focus groups included Drug Court participants who identified critical factors related to obtaining, maintaining, and upgrading employment skills (Staton, Mateyoke, Leukefeld, Cole, Hopper, & Logan, 2002). As expected, focus group findings indicated that Drug Court participants encountered a variety of employment issues that included difficulty in balancing work and treatment involvement. Focus group participants also expressed a desire for job readiness training/job placement opportunities and indicated that a major employment barrier is finding employer who would hire ex-offenders and drug users.

Grounded in the focus group findings, employment manuals, and established clinical approaches. The intervention includes three phases: obtaining employment, maintaining employment, and upgrading employment, all of which are projected to take 16 weeks for each participant (See Table 1).

*Table 1.* Employment Intervention Phases

Phase	Content
I. Obtaining Employment	Getting immediate employment, employment behavioral contracting, and job readiness assessment
II. Maintaining Employment	Resolving conflicts at work, setting goals and problem solving, and life skills development
III. Upgrading Employment	Identifying possible employers, job development, and job placement

Group sessions are the primary service modalities used. Motivation interviewing, structure story telling, and thought mapping are used in weekly group sessions (Leukefeld et al., 2000.) Individual sessions incorporate motivational interviewing, thought mapping, behavioral contracting, and strengths-based case management to focus on problem solving, job searches, completing job applications, resume writing, and job interviewing. Individual sessions also help participants who are struggling with particular issues that impede their employment success. Examples of these sessions include continued use of drugs and alcohol, coworkers who use drugs on the job, conflicts with coworkers, and thinking errors.

The employment counselor should begin each group session by introducing the session to the participants. For the convenience of the employment counselor, this manual provides suggested dialogue in quotations throughout the sessions. Each session is divided into headings for ease of understanding and organization.

These sessions are designed to be completed in about one hour. However, the nature of group discussion may lead to shorter or longer group times. The employment counselor should focus on completing as many of the session objectives as possible.

## **SESSION 1: THE WANT-ADS AND NETWORKING: FINDING A JOB THAT MEETS YOUR NEEDS**

### **Session 1 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

Identifying Your Job Needs

Full Time Employment or a Temporary Job: Which One is for You?

How Do I Decide if I am Ready for Full-time Employment?

Preparing for the Job Search

Where to Look for a Job

    Temporary Agency

    Want Ads

    Networking

Calling Potential Employers for Information

Exercise: Want Ad Information

Practicing Job Search Skills

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 1 Handout 1 IDENTIFYING YOUR JOB NEEDS

Session 1 Handout 2 ARE YOU READY FOR FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT?

Session 1 Handout 3 USING WANT ADS IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

Session 1 Handout 4 CREATING A SCRIPT FOR NETWORKING

Session 1 Handout 5 INTRODUCING YOURSELF IN AN INFORMATIONAL  
INTERVIEW

Session 1 Handout 6 EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK IN AN  
INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

**SESSION 1**  
**THE WANT-ADS AND NETWORKING:**  
**FINDING A JOB THAT MEETS YOUR NEEDS**

Message to the Employment Counselor:

*Note: Before beginning this session, review with participants that the purpose of this employment program is to help them obtain, maintain, and upgrade employment. Explain that each session includes several activities such as group work and skill building. Tell participants they will be expected to complete worksheets which are distributed in group. Emphasize participation, as well as an openness to try new ways to approach getting and keeping a job.*

*Explain to participants that this employment intervention consists of one hour weekly group session for 16 weeks. Sessions 1-6 will focus on helping participants obtain employment. Session 7-13 will teach participants skills to maintain their current employment. Session 14-16 will help participants upgrade their employment.*

This session focuses on creative ways to encourage participants to develop their skills, and use these skills to find a job. It is important for the employment counselor to encourage participants to start looking for jobs they would like in the future and to think about things they enjoyed doing before using drugs. Encourage participants to explore the relationship between employment and recovery and to assess jobs that could be fulfilling and conducive to their recovery.

It is important to understand that being unemployed and looking for a job may be difficult. Support participants in their fears of failure and the pressures that life changes bring. Discuss the importance of temporary employment and how beneficial it can be to a recovering person who has experienced employment problems. Encourage discussion about employment, if possible, to help participants come to terms with treatment and what this means for prospective employment. Talk about labels participants place on themselves and the implications for past employment. Discuss the idea that participants may hear “no” when they apply for jobs.

Participants are adjusting to being told what they can and can't do. Following a new schedule could be difficult and adjusting to a lifestyle “off the streets” is different. The purpose of this session is to introduce participants to both traditional and non-traditional job-search methods. Two-thirds of all jobs are “landed” through non-traditional ways such as networking and making direct contacts with employers. One key to getting a job is meeting people who can hire a person before a position actually opens.

Message to Group Participants:

“The purpose of this employment session is to discuss how to get a job, keep a job, or get a better job. You will become familiar with other group members and gain an understanding of the kind of job that meets your needs. The emphasis is on helping you find a job that meets your needs and provides an adequate challenge. By the end of the

program, you should be thinking about the type of job you want rather than taking the first job that comes along or taking a job that you do not intend to keep.”

“Doing something a person enjoys and getting paid for it is what many people want in a job. Although this is possible, finding that job takes time and effort in your job search. Two-thirds of all jobs are “obtained” by networking with people you know (warm-calling) and calling possible employers that you do not know (cold-calling) to see if positions are available now or in the future (Farr, 1997). Today we will talk about creative ways to use the classifieds and the yellow pages as well as how to develop a job search network.”

### Session Objectives:

- Help participants identify what job needs are important to them.
- Help participants identify whether full-time or temporary employment is more appropriate for them.
- Help participants search for employment through want ads, temporary agencies, and networking.
- Help participants learn to use informational interviews to gather additional information about a position.

### Materials:

Handout 1	Identifying Your Job Needs
Handout 2	Are you Ready for Full Time Employment?
Handout 3	Using Want Ads in Your Job Search
Handout 4	Creating a Script for Networking
Handout 5	Introducing Yourself in an Informational Interview
Handout 6	Examples of Questions to Ask in an Informational Interview

### Employment Counselor’s Session Introduction:

1. Begin the group by introducing yourself and discussing the purpose of the employment intervention sessions. Offer the group the opportunity to ask questions.
2. Ask everyone to say their name, where they currently work, how long they have worked there, and if they believe their job needs are being met, and why or why not. Also ask what they would like to change about their current job.

You may want to follow-up with additional questions such as:

“What do you like about your job? How supportive is your boss about your participation in this program? Are there ways that your job makes it more difficult for you while in recovery?”

Although a focus of the intervention to make a connection between drug use and employment, it is important that you meet participants “where they are.” If they do not see a connection between drug use and employment, there is no need to push the connection.

You should share a personal story or experience of a job that did not meet your needs which includes unhappiness about a job situation. In addition, sharing information about disliking a job or taking a job that is too easy or too challenging can also help.

If you do not have a story, the following story may be adapted and presented.

“Six years ago the budget at the place where I worked was cut and so were my hours. I was in school and not working many hours but that did not change the cost of rent. I was in a panic until a classmate said she would be taking the summer off from her job, and they needed a temporary replacement—at \$8.00 an hour. She described the job to me as “washing dishes” and sometimes “mixing some things” in a lab. At the time I was working with infants—I washed things and mixed formula all the time so it sounded good to me—and it paid \$1.50 more an hour. So, I signed up. The first couple of days were okay but after a while I realized that there were only two people who even said hello to me and neither of them spoke much English! Then it began to bother me that my job was to scrub smelly, gooey, fungus off small glass tubes. The stuff I had to mix smelled worse—especially when I had to bake it. I also did not like that, I *smelled* like the stuff I was working around. Pretty soon I noticed that, although I worked the same hours at this job than my other job, I had more trouble getting up, began staying up later at night, and even overslept a few times. I became angry and resentful of my new job. In fact, I stopped noticing the good things in my life because I disliked my job so much. Finally, after worrying that I would be fired, I quit. However, this was not really a bad thing because quitting actually opened my eyes about what I really wanted in a job. I decided to take the opportunity to explore new areas that interested me—ones that paid more than I made cleaning fungus. Perhaps, we will talk more about this in future weeks but now I want us to talk about some of the things I learned about myself.”

Probe for responses with the following introduction:

“At first, I thought my *need* was to make as much money as possible by doing anything that someone would pay me to do. However, as a result of this experience, I learned that although I was able to support myself, it was more important that I earn the money doing something that interested me. I also learned that although I tend to be a shy person, it is important to me that work with friendly people. Finally, I learned that it is important to feel that I am learning new information while contributing to people. None of these needs were met at my lab job.”

### **Identifying Your Job Needs**

“There are several things to think about when considering what you need in a job. We all know that we need things like a paycheck and a safe working environment, but to really do a good job at work, other types of needs should be considered. This handout is going



to help us identify what types of needs you feel it is important to have met in a job. Then we will eventually use this information to find a job that better meets your needs. The two needs we will focus on now are where you want to be in an organization and the most important things you want to get out of a job.”

Distribute Handout 1: “Identifying Your Job Needs” to participants. Discuss responses by asking, “Is anyone surprised at the needs they chose?”

### **Full Time Employment or a Temporary Job: Which One is for You?**

After figuring out job needs, it is important to determine if full time or temporary employment is more appropriate for participants’ current situations. It may be helpful to explain the difference between full time and temporary employment, then discuss the pros and cons of both types of employment. Ask one group member to list the information on an easel or chalk board. Like most sessions, you should encourage group discussion. If participants need prompting, some examples follow.

Example:

#### *Pros of Working with a Temporary Agency*

- It’s an opportunity to try a job I don’t know much about.
- I might get a full time job if I work hard.
- I will have many job options available to me.
- It will be easy to work around my schedule.

#### *Cons of Working with a Temporary Agency*

- I might not get benefits.
- I might like the job but not get on full time.
- I am afraid I will have to do things I don’t like.
- I might not be able to take a job due to contracts.

#### *Pros of Having a Full-time Job*

- I get to the same job every day.
- I’ll have a steady income and benefits.
- The ability to meet financial obligations.
- A sense of accomplishment and pride.

#### *Cons of Having a Full-time Job*

- I’ll have less time for self.
- Feeling stressed may lead to relapse.
- I’ll have to get up in the morning.
- I’ll have less time for the job-hunt to find a better job.

After discussing these pros and cons, ask the following questions to prompt further discussion on whether temporary employment might be better. During this discussion, you can stress ways a stable work history can be developed from several temporary jobs if participants are unsure of their interests. Temporary jobs can also provide an opportunity to build a wide range of skills. Sometimes it is better to take advantage of the benefits of a temp job because if you aren’t quite ready to full time employment, it can actually hurt your work record. For example, working at many full time jobs and quitting can hurt a person’s work history and decrease the stability that is important for recovery. Temporary employment can help bridge the gap. Lead a discussion of the possibilities of getting a job using a temp agency.

1. “Have any of you ever worked as a temporary employee?” *If yes, ask those individuals, “Would you say something about your experience?”*
2. “Under what circumstances would you consider working as a temporary employee?”
3. “Can you think of any risks to your recovery as a temp? What about working in a full-time job?”
4. *If participants give examples of threats to their recovery that would be worsened by working as a temp ask: “Is there anything you could do or change about the situation to counteract these threats?”*
5. “What are some steps you could take to make the most of your experience as a temporary employee? What about as a full-time employee?”

### **How Do I Decide if I am Ready for Full-time Employment?**

Distribute Handout 2: “Are You Ready for Full Time Employment?” and explain that there are several things to consider when deciding if you are ready for full time employment. Things like having a solid work history, valuable skills, low absenteeism, and good references suggest the participant seek full time employment. Lead a discussion using the following questions on the handout.

- What is your work history?
- What skills do you have?
- Have you made a career choice?
- Are you on time to work?
- What is the longest amount of time you stayed at a job?
- How recent is your last job?
- Have you ever had a job you really enjoyed? Would you like to return to that field?
- Do you have good references?

### **Preparing for the Job Search**

Note: You should explain that when participants decide what job needs they have and whether full time or temporary employment is most appropriate, they should prepare to begin a job search. Discuss the following tips on preparing to search for employment with the group.

- **Treat your job search as a full-time job.** Eighty-five percent of job seekers remain unemployed because they only spend 4 hours per week looking for a job. Looking for a job is partly a numbers game. The greater the number of jobs you apply for, the greater your chances are of landing a job.
- **Planning is important to be successful in your job search.** The key parts of a job search are having a plan, good time management, and keeping records of your actions. The plan might include identifying places to look for a job or what type of employment you are seeking. If you begin a job search without a plan, you will waste time and end up feeling frustrated. Even though you may be anxious to begin your search, take time to make a plan.

- **Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.** Act as soon as possible on each job lead. Remember that a certain amount of job success is due to timing. Wasting time could waste valuable job leads.
- **Keep yourself thinking positively.** It is difficult to spend a lot of energy looking for a job and then hearing “no”. Getting turned down is stressful, and causes many people to simply stop looking. You need to take care of yourself in order to keep your thoughts positive and to minimize stress. If you are rejected, think about other possibilities. Reassure yourself about the positive qualities you have, and keep your thoughts in perspective Taylor, 1995).

### Where to Look for a Job

“When most people think of looking for a job--What do you think is the first thing that pops into a person’s mind? Generally, the newspaper. Want ads can be a good place to find a job for some of us but actually only about 15% of all people get their jobs through want ads (Farr, 1997). We are now going to talk about using the want ads for the job search in a creative way. We will also talk about using temporary agencies as a stepping-stone to full-time employment. Finally, we will discuss how networking can be a fruitful way to find jobs that are not actually advertised.”

### Want Ads

“Want ads in the local paper are a major source of job leads and are relatively easy to use. Using want ads efficiently in your job search can help you find employment and allow you to develop skills that you can use in future job searches. There are several things to keep in mind in the want ads:”

- Find job listings that interest you.
- Select jobs that are most suited to your skills and needs.
- Identify agency ads and know what they offer and what they want.
- Follow-up appropriate ads.

Distribute Handout 3: “Using Want Ads in Your Job Search”. Discuss the strategies listed that help participants using the want ads.

“As you read each ad, you should gather information to see if the job is worth pursuing. Some of the information comes from the ad. However, other information comes from a job interview. It is useful to make a list of the things that need to be addressed before deciding if the job is worth pursuing.”

The list should include:

- |                   |                                      |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ○ Pay             | ○ Hours                              |
| ○ Location        | ○ Training & promotion possibilities |
| ○ Skills required | ○ Application process                |
| ○ Job duties      | ○ Benefits                           |

## Temporary Agency

“Even though you may be looking for a full-time job, temporary jobs can be a place to start. Temporary employment agencies can provide opportunities for employment. For example, using an agency may help if you have not chosen a career field or have limited work experience. You can be assigned to several different temp jobs and can find out which jobs you are more suited for. A temp agency will also help you gain good references to use when applying for a full time job. The first step is contacting a temporary agency and asking about available jobs. Temporary agencies are usually listed in the phonebook yellow pages under “temporary agency” or “temporary employment.”

“When you first contact a temp agency, you may be asked to do a series of skills assessment tests. For instance, if you are seeking a clerical position, the agency representative may ask you to take a test that assesses your ability to file items alphabetically, proofread, follow directions, and type. The agency uses your test scores to match your skills with the available jobs to market to potential employers.”

“Usually, after completing a skills assessment, you will be interviewed. You should treat this interview in the same way you would treat an interview for permanent employment. The interviewer will assess your communication skills, your previous work experience, your attitudes about work, your interests and long-term career goals, and the degree of professionalism you present. During the interview you also have an opportunity to discuss the hours and job placement locations you prefer. The agency will then take the information on your interests and availability, past work experience, and the image you give as an employee to place you in an available position. During the interview, the interviewer will usually present you with a contract that you must sign before you can be placed into a job. The contract describes the agency’s expectations, including rules and benefits, such as vacation pay, holiday pay, and health insurance if offered.”

## Networking

Note: You should briefly discuss the importance of networking by presenting the following information:

**Never underestimate the power of “word-of-mouth” in your job search.** The majority of job openings are never advertised. Obviously, employers fill these positions with persons who have found out about the opening from somewhere other than the want ads, an employment agency, or job listings. Many people learn about job openings from friends, relatives, acquaintances, and members of community groups. You could ask people you know about possible job leads. This is called networking.

**Networking involves letting people know that you are looking for an employer that could use your skills.** Where do you begin? Begin with the people you know best: friends, relatives, and others. Let them know your skills, your abilities, and the type of job you are seeking. At first, you might think, “What does my aunt Josie know about the computer industry?” You may be inclined to overlook people who don’t have obvious links to the field in which you are

interested; however, this is a mistake. Your aunt Josie might have a friend whose daughter is involved in the computer industry. You never know what valuable information or important contacts people may be able to give you. Always ask each contact for a couple of names who might have some information about job openings. In this way, your list of contacts grows quickly.

**Others might be able to suggest possible employers to contact.** Remember, other people can give valuable job search tips during their own search.

**It is important to think ahead about what you will say.** You don't want to forget any important points, and you want to be concise so you don't waste time. In general, you should tell people what kind of job you are looking for and why you are looking for a job. Then you can describe your job skills. Finally, you can ask the person for the type of help you think he or she can provide. Create a script and refer to it as you speak to a contact person.

Distribute Handout 4: "Creating a Networking Script" and use this as an example to guide networking with others

**The following is an example of a conversation a participant might have with a job contact:**

"I'm looking for a job as a cook. I have experience as a cook in several different restaurants. Your sister told me that you owned a restaurant and suggested that you might know of some restaurants that are looking for help. Can you think of any places I should ask about a job?"

**You can improve your efficiency by giving your contact person a copy of your resume** (either by mail or in person). The information you give when you make contact may be forgotten over time. But, a resume gives people something concrete to have for the future. After you have contacted each person, you should send a thank you note to each person for giving you the names of other contacts.

**After getting a job, it is important to notify your network about your success.** Unless they hear from you they will assume that you are still job seeking and may continue to look for job leads.

**Keeping a record of your contacts will help your networking efforts.** If you do not keep your contact information in an organized record, you risk duplicating your efforts, misplacing valuable information, and forgetting to send thank you notes.

The most important information to record is:

- ✓ Dates of contact
- ✓ Name and title of contact
- ✓ Address and phone #
- ✓ Job lead information given by the contact
- ✓ Date you sent a thank you card

(Source: Taylor, 1995; Azrin & Besalel, 1980.)

## Calling Potential Employers for Information

Distribute Handout 5: “Introducing Yourself in an Informal Interview” and Handout 6: “Examples of Questions to Ask in an Informal Interview.” You should explain the process of setting up an informal interview. This usually involves a phone call to an employer for information. Explain that participants may be more successful by calling companies found in the yellow pages or from an idea suggested by a friend. Encourage contacting the company by phone, because using a personal telephone call is most efficient to gather information. You should emphasize the importance of making a good first impression, as this will be the first contact with a potential employer. The handouts will help participants know what types of things to say and what questions to ask.

### Exercise: Want Ad Information

#### EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR PREPARATION:

1. Use a classified section of the paper as an example.
2. Use copies of the classifieds for each participant or use the ad as an example.
3. Prepare a list of typical “Help Wanted” ads to show and to use for practice in reading the want ads. It may help to distribute a copy of an ad. This way you can be sure that each participant knows exactly to what you are referring.

Use sample ads to help participants evaluate jobs using the limited information given in classified ads, so participants can evaluate whether the job is a realistic possibility.

Explain that other information can come from an ad. Use the following ad to illustrate how ads can be used to help find a direction for future career paths. Go through the ad and break down each part so participants understand what the job requirements are, what the job duties will be, and what the participants needs to do to apply. Stress the value of reading ads on a regular basis to learn what skills employers want.

#### **FIELD CONSULTANT –DAIRY QUEEN**

Seeking an energetic person with management background to act as a business consultant for operators of franchised restaurants. Great opportunity to develop your operational, financial, and marketing skills needed to run any successful business in today’s competitive markets.

This is a full-time exempt Field Consultant position in the greater metropolitan area and is designed to provide management support to franchised restaurants.

Four year degree preferred. Any fast food/restaurant experience is a plus. A good driving record and a valid driver’s license is required. Excellent communication skills are needed. 50% travel; (up to two-week increments) is required. Excellent benefits and starting salary of \$35,000 with potential to reach \$40, 000 based upon proven performance within first six-months to first year.

(Source: Herald Leader Classifieds)

Begin the discussion by saying:

“So, what do we know about this ad? Who would stop reading this ad as soon as you see the word “consultant”? How many of you have worked in a fast food restaurant? If you answered yes to these questions, you may have “robbed” yourself of a job opportunity. There are several things you should understand about ads.”

- The titles listed for most jobs do not necessarily “sound like” what they are, so it is important to read the required skills.
- Reading ads lets you know what employers want so you can know what skills you need to develop in a competitive job market.
- You must know your skills and believe that you are capable of doing well in a job.

“Not giving you credit for being capable of doing good work only leads to underemployment and staying in a low-income job. You can do exactly what you believe you can do. If you are willing to honestly start looking at who you are and what skills you have rather than what your criminal record says, you have a great chance of finding a job that is perfect for you.”

### **Practicing Job Search Skills**

To practice the job search skills which were just discussed, present Brian and Yvonne’s stories to the group. After each story, lead a discussion about each using the questions after each story. Discuss what types of things each person did right or wrong and what types of needs each person may have in looking for a job. Brainstorm the types of jobs that might be right for Brian and then Yvonne

#### *Brian*

“Brian never had a steady job with one employer. Although he is 24-years-old, his lifestyle never forced him to keep a steady job until now. His parents gave him a deadline to move out of the house. Brian considered a full time job with several companies, but he is not happy about the idea of having an everyday job. Brian signed on with a temporary agency to do light manual labor, painting, and construction work. However, since moving out on his own, Brian can’t afford a phone but the temporary agency and his job requires him to call in to find out where he will be working. Brian has not called in several times when the weather was nice so he could go hiking or hang out with friends. What do you think Brian should do?”

#### Questions:

“What things does Brian enjoy doing in his free time?”

“Does anyone think that a job working at a local park or leading hiking tours may be something Brian would enjoy?”

“Were there any jobs listed in the want ads that might interest Brian?”

As participants are discussing Brain's story, assure that it is okay if they are not ready to jump into the work force with a smile on their face. Emphasize the importance of using employment as a way to refocus the way they live their life. Stress the stabilizing nature of holding a steady job and the long-term benefits of getting a job doing what a person likes. Remember, not liking a job or not doing well at a job doesn't mean a person is a failure, it means that the right match was not found. With motivation, some direction, and time spent on finding a good career match, employment can be good.

*Yvonne*

“After three weeks of looking for a job, Yvonne doesn't have a job. She looked through newspaper want-ads, made a few calls, and went to a couple of places with Help-Wanted signs. Yvonne and her friend Paula tried to get jobs at a new store that opened. The first time they went, the person in charge of hiring was not there so they had to go back later. Yvonne, who was already mad about having to pay bus fare twice for the same trip, forgot to bring all of the information she needed to completely fill out her job application so she turned her application in without answering every question. Paula was hired the following week. Yvonne never received a call. Yvonne's uncle also told her about a job at the restaurant where he worked, but she took three days to get around to calling the restaurant manager, and the job was filled. Yvonne considered calling some of the places where she left applications or was interviewed, but she had been to so many places that she couldn't remember where she went, much less to whom she had talked.”

### Questions:

“What could Yvonne have done to make her job search easier?”

“Why do you believe Yvonne experienced this outcome?”

“If Yvonne asked for advice from you, what would you advise she do in the future?”

(Source: Hacker, 1999 “The Case of the Frustrated Job Seeker”)

### **Closing Comments**

Being able to identify participants' job needs will help them find a job that is right for them. Once they can evaluate whether they are ready for a full-time job or employment through a temporary agency, they can begin their job search. Using want ads and networking through friends and old co-workers can be a great way to find a lead on a new full-time job. Temporary agencies can help place participants in entry level jobs, giving them an opportunity to build skills to increase their employability. Either route will help participants improve their job searching skills and work skills.



## Session 1 Handout 1 IDENTIFYING YOUR JOB NEEDS

*Directions: This handout is to help you decide the type of work environment you prefer. This information can help you decide what type of job is right for you.*

When you are looking for the “right” job you need to consider the characteristics of a good job. Persons who have the greatest job satisfaction tend to have jobs that are compatible with their personal needs.

Before starting a job search, it’s a good idea to take a few minutes to inventory and prioritize your work needs. The following is a list of work values that have been identified as being important in job satisfaction. Read each statement to decide what type of work environment will be best for you.

### **Do you prefer to work:**

- By yourself and for yourself
- By yourself but for another person or organization
- With another person
- As a member of a team of equals
- As a member of a team where you receive directions from another
- As a member of a hierarchy where you are the boss or supervisor or owner
- In another situation?

### **What rewards would you like to receive on your job?**

- Social contact
- A chance to help others
- A chance to bring others closer to God
- Intellectual stimulation
- A chance to use my skills and experience
- A chance to make decisions
- A chance to be creative
- A chance to exercise leadership
- A chance to be popular
- Respect
- Adventure
- Challenge
- Influence
- Security
- Independence
- Wealth
- Power
- Fame

**Which of these are most important to you in a job?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

(Source: Bolles, 1998)

**Session 1 Handout 2**  
**ARE YOU READY FOR FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT?**

**How Do I Decide if I am Ready for Full-time Employment?**

- **How is your work history?**
- **What skills do you have?**
- **Have you made a career choice?**
- **Are you on time to work?**
- **What is the longest amount of time you have ever stayed at a job?**
- **How recent is your last job?**
- **Have you ever had a job you really enjoyed? Would you like to return to that field?**
- **Do you have good references?** References are very important! Do you know the first and last names of former supervisors? Not knowing the names of these individuals may appear to potential employers that you did not have an investment in your jobs or that you did not plan to stay around long enough for the supervisor's name to matter to you.

### Session 1 Handout 3

## USING WANT ADS IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

When you think about looking for a job, does searching through the want ads come to mind? It does for many people. Looking through the want ads is one of the more common job search techniques. You will need to develop strategies on how to tackle the classified job ads in order to use want ads efficiently in your job search, otherwise you may feel you are spinning your wheels and getting nowhere. The following presents some helpful strategies:

- ✓ **Read want ads daily.**
  - Increase your chances of success by responding to ads early.
  - Read the ads daily to ensure that you respond to ads as quickly as possible.
  
- ✓ **Focus on specific types of ads.**
  - Focus on one or two job fields.
  - However, be aware that employers may list job openings under unfamiliar titles.
  
- ✓ **Develop a system to keep track of your responses to ads.**
  - Mark the jobs in which you are interested.
  - Write down all of the ads to which you will respond.
  - Note the actions you take to respond to the ads.
  - If the ad states, “No phone calls, please,” do not call.
  
- ✓ **It is better to respond than not to respond.**
  - Even if you don’t have some of the qualifications that the employer mentions in the ad but have other qualifications, respond to the ad.
  - Employers will choose the best applicant even if they don’t meet all qualifications.
  
- ✓ **Know what to expect.**
  - Most small company ads generate about two-dozen responses.
  - Larger company ads may generate over a thousand responses.
  - Only two out of every 100 applicants who respond will be contacted to schedule an interview.
  - When dealing with a large company expect a delay of up to a month before hearing from an employer.

(Source: Dahlstrom & Co., 1998)

**Session 1 Handout 4**  
**CREATING A NETWORKING SCRIPT**

Use the prompts to create a script for asking a contact for job lead information.

What type of job am I looking for?

---

---

Why am I looking for a job?

---

---

What are my skills related to this kind of work?

---

---

Tell the person why you think he or she could be of assistance.

---

---

Ask for the type of assistance you would from your contact.

---

---

Ask for the names of 2 other persons who might have job lead information.

---

---

Thank you for your time and help.

Now record the following important job lead information:

Date of Contact	Name, Title, or Contact	Address and Telephone	Job Lead Info Given by Contact	Date you send a Thank-you card

**Session 1 Handout 5**  
**INTRODUCING YOURSELF IN AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW**

At the beginning of the interview you need to take a couple of minutes to introduce yourself. Follow the prompts below to create a script for your introduction.

**Hi. My name is** \_\_\_\_\_

**Explain your current work status.** (*Employed, looking for a job, re-entering the work force, or looking for a job.*)

---

---

**Give your recent work history.** (*What types of jobs have you held recently? For how long?*)

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**Explain why you are interested in learning more about the field in which the interviewer works.**

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**Session 1 Handout 6**  
**EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK IN AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW**

- 1) What do you like most/least about your job?
- 2) Can you tell me about how you got to your present position?
- 3) What skills or qualities do you think a person needs to be successful in this field?
- 4) If you had it to do over again, would you do anything differently? If so, what?
- 5) What is the average pay rate for an entry-level position in this field?
- 6) What is a typical workday like?
- 7) How much variety of tasks is involved in this job?
- 8) What is the turnover rate like?
- 9) What is the best way to search for a job in this field
- 10) What is the future outlook for this field?
- 11) May I keep in touch with you to let you know how my job search is going?
- 12) Do you know anyone else who could talk with me about job options that would be right for me?

Can you think of any other questions you would like to ask of someone who works in the field you are considering? Take a few minutes to think of your own questions.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **SESSION 2: IDENTIFYING EMPLOYER’S NEEDS: WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT**

### **Session 2 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants:*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor’s Session Introduction*

Evaluating Yourself: Personality and Attitude Self Assessment

When You Aren’t Offered the Job

Who Would You Like to Have Working For YOU?

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 2 Handout 1: WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT

Session 2 Handout 2: PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDE SELF ASSESSMENT

Session 2 Handout 3: TOP PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDE CHARACTERISTICS

Session 2 Handout 4: PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDE CHARACTERISTICS TO WORK  
ON

Session 2 Handout 5: WHY APPLICANTS DON’T GET JOBS



## **SESSION 2**

### **IDENTIFYING EMPLOYER'S NEEDS: WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT**

#### Message to the Employment Counselor:

It is important to help participants recognize what employers want. This session focuses on identifying important characteristics that employers want by encouraging participants to think about which of their personality characteristics, attitudes, and strengths to develop or change. These desirable characteristics may be ones which enhance their job performance or fit with the type of job they need.

#### Message to Group Participants:

“Employers are looking for an employee who is job-ready and who has basic skills. Employers want to hire people with appropriate attitudes, traits, and skills. Employers also want employees who will continue to show desirable characteristics every day on the job.”

#### Session Objectives:

- Help participants understand characteristics that are important to employers.
- Identify participant personality and attitude strengths.
- Help participants target characteristics employers want that can be developed.
- Identify strategies for developing those personality characteristics.

#### Materials:

- Handout 1 “What Employers Want”
- Handout 2 “Personality and Attitude Self Assessment”
- Handout 3 “Top Personality and Attitude Characteristics”
- Handout 4 “Personality and Attitude Characteristics to Work On”
- Handout 5: “Why Applicants Don’t Get Jobs”

#### Employment Counselor’s Session Introduction:

“There are certain characteristics that employers will want when deciding to hire an employee. An employer wants to be sure that these characteristics are going to continue after the interview or probationary work period is over. What do you think employers want?”

List responses on the board. Distribute and discuss Handout 1:” What Employers Want.” Go over information from group members that is not on the list.

## **Evaluating Yourself: Personality and Attitude Self Assessment**

Distribute Handout 2: “Personality and Attitude Self Assessment” and ask each participant to check the characteristics they believe describe them. Explain that these characteristics are our personality traits-- things that make up who we are. Make sure that participants understand that no one will see their answers. Read the directions with them. As you go over the directions, emphasize that participants should answer each question the way they feel about themselves now, not the person they would like to be in the future. After each person is finished checking their characteristics, ask them to circle their top three personality and attitudinal strengths. Participants may be unaware that these characteristics are strengths they possess. Use examples from the list and discuss why they are considered strengths.

Distribute Handout 3: “Top Personality and Attitude Characteristics”. Ask each participant to record their top 3 personality and attitudinal strengths. Ask for volunteers to discuss an example. As you discuss these examples also discuss how their strengths would be appreciated on the job.

Distribute Handout 4: “Personality and Attitude Characteristics to Work On.” Ask everyone to record three characteristics that they would like to work on. Remind participants it will help them to be honest with themselves. Discuss how they can improve each characteristic. For example, if a person wanted to work on being more independent on the job, he or she may look for work that needs to be done without being told.

## **When You Aren’t Offered the Job**

“There are several reasons you might not be offered the job. There are reasons that we can control, and some we can’t control. For example, if an employer does not want to hire you because of your criminal record, you can’t control that. There are things you can control, such as the attitude and personality characteristics. To find out what some of these characteristics may be, don’t hesitate to call the employer back. Let him or her know that you want to strengthen your application for job positions elsewhere and would appreciate some feedback and some advice. Be respectful and you’ll probably get some good information.”

Distribute Handout 5: “Why Applicants Don’t Get Jobs” and explain to participants how these behaviors can lead to missing out on a job.

## **Who Would You Like to Have Working For YOU?**

Present the following stories to participants and discuss the follow-up questions.

### *Tommy*

“Tommy got a job at a fast food restaurant. Tommy showed up on time and came every day. Tommy and Cheryl (another employee) spent a lot of time talking. In fact, Tommy said one of the best things about his job was talking to Cheryl. Tommy did not really like waiting on customers and usually went away whenever he could. And, although Tommy showed up when he was on the schedule to work, he never volunteered to help when, for

example, someone was sick or wanted a day off for a personal reason. Tommy did everything his manager asked him to do, but Tommy believed that if the manager did not ask him to do it, there is no reason to volunteer. When Tommy talked to his buddies about his job, he really didn't have anything good to say. In fact, Tommy advised his friends not to eat at the place he worked."

### *Lawrence*

"Lawrence got a job at a shoe store. Lawrence showed up on time and came every day he was scheduled. Lawrence said that one of the best things about his job was that he felt his manager and co-workers respected him. He liked that he often outsold his co-workers. Although Lawrence sometimes thought the customers were difficult, he still tried to be a good sales person. Lawrence did extra work around the store when things needed to be done without anyone asking him. Several times Lawrence came in when one of his co-workers was sick. Another time a female co-worker needed to attend her son's scout program, Lawrence offered to work for her so that she could go. Although Lawrence recognized that he didn't want to work at the shoe store forever, he only said positive things about the store where he worked to his friends and family, and he always told them about store specials."

After presenting the structured stories, ask the following questions:

1. "Which employee would you want to work for you and why?"
2. "What are the differences between Lawrence and Tommy? What makes one a better employee than the other? What are the characteristics?"
3. "Add any desirable characteristics mentioned in the discussion."

### **Closing Comments**

It is helpful to know which characteristics employers find desirable in a potential employee. Participants can then evaluate themselves based upon whether they have these wanted characteristics. If participants find they are lacking, they will know what areas to work on to improve their chances of being hired. However, some participants may find they already have several of these characteristics. Either way, participants are on their way to learning new skills and recognizing and strengthening old skills.

**Session 2 Handout 1**  
**WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT**

An employee who:

1. Shows up for work.
2. Has a positive attitude.
3. Shows pride in the quality of their work.
4. Does work without having to be told.
5. Can be trusted.
6. Practices good work habits.
7. Has a good or positive attitude toward company and employer.
8. Communicates well with others
  - Reads, writes, and can do basic math
  - Listens carefully when others speak
9. Is willing to learn.
10. Pays attention to and follows instructions.
11. Has the motivation to do well at work.
12. Comes to work on time every day.
13. Finds ways to be better at work.
14. Solves problems with others.
15. Is respectful to co-workers.
16. Is willing to compromise.
17. Works as a team member.
18. Maintains clean, organized work space.
19. Is an appropriate leader.
20. Sets goals.
21. Motivates self and others to do better at work.

**Session 2 Handout 2**  
**PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDE SELF ASSESSMENT**

Several factors which determine happiness and success at work are your personality, outlook on life, and your willingness to work. Think about aspects of your personality and how you feel and react in different work situations. These characteristics are strengths that you have which will help you be successful at work.

Put a check mark next to the following areas which you believe best describe you. Think about characteristics you have now. Are there some characteristics you would like to develop? Add to the list other words that you feel may describe you. Check with others too, do they see you as you see yourself?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Able to concentrate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good-natured	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rational
<input type="checkbox"/>	Able to manage stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	Helpful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Realistic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brave	<input type="checkbox"/>	Honest	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reflective
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aggressive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Funny	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reliable
<input type="checkbox"/>	Able to Compromise	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reserved
<input type="checkbox"/>	Easy-going	<input type="checkbox"/>	Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resourceful
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intelligent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Responsible
<input type="checkbox"/>	Thinks before acting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kind	<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk-taking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assertive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Likeable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-confident
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pay special attention to detail	<input type="checkbox"/>	Common sense	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-controlled
<input type="checkbox"/>	Professional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loyal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reasonable
<input type="checkbox"/>	Calm	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sensitive
<input type="checkbox"/>	Careful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Careful Planner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Truthful
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cautious	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modest	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sociable
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cheerful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Motivated	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stable
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear-thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Open-minded	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supportive
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determined	<input type="checkbox"/>	Optimistic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tactful
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confident	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organized	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teachable
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cares about others	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outgoing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Determined
<input type="checkbox"/>	Creative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Patient	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thorough
<input type="checkbox"/>	Curious	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well-groomed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thoughtful
<input type="checkbox"/>	Detail-oriented	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tough
<input type="checkbox"/>	Efficient	<input type="checkbox"/>	Practical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trusting
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Has new ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trustworthy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concerned about others	<input type="checkbox"/>	On time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Understanding
<input type="checkbox"/>	Excited	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quick	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexible
<input type="checkbox"/>	Friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quiet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enjoy humor

**Session 2 Handout 3**  
**TOP PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDE CHARACTERISTICS**

**List the 3 personality strengths you like best and think of an example of a time when you successfully used each one. How would you like to use this characteristic on your next job?**

1. Personality Strength:  
Example:

2. Personality Strength:  
Example:

3. Personality Strength:  
Example:

**Session 2 Handout 4**  
**PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDE CHARACTERISTICS TO WORK ON**

**Please choose three characteristics mentioned in the discussion today that you did not identify as a strength but would like to improve. Write each characteristic below then add ideas about how to develop or display these three characteristics.**

1. Personality Characteristic To Work On:  
Ways to Develop or Show this Characteristic:

2. Personality Characteristic To Work On:  
Ways to Develop or Show this Characteristic:

3. Personality Characteristic To Work On:  
Ways to Develop or Show this Characteristic:

## Session 2 Handout 5 WHY APPLICANTS DON'T GET JOBS

(Source: Sull, 1998; Hacker, 1999)

The applicant...

- 1) Is caught lying.
- 2) Shows lack of interest in the interview; is merely shopping around.
- 3) Has a hostile attitude; is rude or impolite.
- 4) Is unable to express himself clearly; weak communicative skills.
- 5) Lacks sincerity.
- 6) Lacks enthusiasm.
- 7) Is evasive concerning information about himself or herself.
- 8) Is concerned only about salary.
- 9) Is unable to concentrate.
- 10) Displays a lack of initiative.
- 11) Is indecisive.
- 12) Has an arrogant attitude.
- 13) Has a persecuted attitude (“They were out to get me”), or general “bad mouthing” previous employers.
- 14) Tries to use pull to get a job.
- 15) Has dirty hands or face.
- 16) Is cynical.
- 17) Is intolerant and has strong prejudices.
- 18) Is late for the interview.
- 19) Has a limp-fish handshake.
- 20) Shows lack of planning for career, or lacks job goals.
- 21) Has not done research into history and products of the company, or generally unprepared for the interview.
- 22) Wants to start in an executive position.
- 23) Lacks maturity.
- 24) Has low standards for behavior.
- 25) Presents extreme appearance.
- 26) Oversells case or undersells case.
- 27) Focuses on weaknesses.
- 28) Lacks skills for the job.



## **SESSION 3: PRESENTING YOUR PAST TO EMPLOYERS**

### **Session 3 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

Rating Your Skills

The Importance of Being Honest

What Can Employers Really Ask Me?

Talking About the Criminal Record

What Employers Want to Know

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 3 Handout 1: RATING YOUR SKILLS

Session 3 Handout 2: SKILLS CHECKLIST

Session 3 Handout 3: BENEFITS OF AN OPEN RECOVERY

Session 3 Handout 4: TELLING THE STORY OF YOUR PAST

## **SESSION 3**

### **FOCUSING ON SKILLS WHILE PRESENTING YOUR PAST TO EMPLOYERS**

#### Message to the Employment Counselor

This session focuses on how to approach a job search for participants with a criminal history. For example, has a participant ever been rejected from a job after self-identifying as an ex-drug abuser or ex-offender, or rejected because the person did not tell the truth about their criminal record when they were hired? Although a criminal past can be a barrier to getting a job, the reason a person is not hired may not be related to his or her criminal history. Each participant should face the possibility that reluctance to share their recovery could be related to their own shame and self-doubt rather than past rejections. If this is an issue, participants can begin solving this problem and proceed with their job search with greater confidence by focusing on skills and being honest about their past.

#### Message to Group Participants:

“Sharing your past with employers seems like a very risky choice. However, your commitment to honesty will show you have a strong commitment to recovery, show employers you are taking responsibility for your previous actions, and will fulfill the legal requirements of reporting your criminal past on job applications. Since your employer will have access to your criminal records, it is in your best interest to be straightforward and honest with them. Remember that there is more to you than your drug problem or your legal history. Those who reject you or are unable to look beyond your past probably would not have made a good employer anyway. Those who accept you will be looking at who you are now.”

“However, even though you will want to be honest about your past, there is a preferred way to share this information with employers. Before discussing any information about your past, you will want to discuss your skills. Think SKILLS and HONESTY when thinking about how to get a job you want. Although employers will be interested in learning about your record before making a decision, you must focus on your skills so a possible employer will know you are capable of doing the job.”

#### Session Objectives:

- Emphasize the importance of honesty about criminal history and of taking a “skills first” strengths approach to job application.
- Discover what skills participants should focus on before presenting their past to employers.
- Practice responding and presenting criminal histories to employers.
- Discuss the consequences if participants aren’t honest about their past.

#### Materials:

Handout 1     “Rating Your Skills”  
Handout 2     “Skills Checklist”

- Handout 3 “Benefits of an Open Recovery”  
Handout 4 “Telling the Story of Your Past”

### Employment Counselor’s Session Introduction:

“Imagine that you’re going to apply for a job that sounds right for you. You believe that you have the skills, and the job seems like a great fit for you. One problem, however, may be that you haven’t held a steady job for several months due to being incarcerated. This means that you have barriers related to your criminal past to overcome.”

“Before we continue, there are a couple of points to clarify. Just because you are a drug user who may have a conviction does not mean that you don’t have strengths to offer a prospective employer. Skills are developed and refined over time. Therefore, a key part of your job search must be skills. There are many employers with good jobs that are available to someone with a good attitude, a good work ethic, some skills, and a willingness to learn. For most employers, being able to do good work can be enough. Other employers may have very strong feelings about hiring anyone with a criminal record. If you hear this, you may want to look somewhere else. It may even be helpful to knock on doors that have previously been closed to you.”

“For employers who are interested in someone with your skills, you may be asked to present information about your drug use and your criminal record. Keep in mind that even though this may be hard, the more comfortable you are with your past the better you will be when talking to employers about what you have to offer. Being nervous or uncomfortable may only make it seem like you are hiding something. The bottom line is that there’s a lot of competition in today’s job market. You are just one of many who need employment. Like everyone else, you have ways to present yourself which includes: resumes, job application, cold calling, cover letters, and the interview. This is why we will spend time today focusing on skills. Remember, SKILLS first, then criminal record.”

### **Rating Your Skills**

Explain that everyone should be very familiar with their skills. You should distribute Handout 1: “Rating Your Skills” to help participants become familiar with their skills for prospective employers. Some of these skills may have been in the Strengths Assessment from the Pre-Intervention Sessions, or personality characteristics identified as strengths from the last session. Examples of valued skills are knowing how to operate certain machinery, use specific tools, or being a “people person.” Skills which can help participants function more smoothly in the workplace can be found on Handout 2: “Skills Checklist.” Also distribute this handout and have participants rate the presence of these skills. Participants should not be encouraged to list skills practiced during illegal activity as a transferable skill. This could create quite a problem when asked about “locksmith” or “accounting” experience acquired while burglarizing or selling drugs.

After group members have filled out the handouts, discuss skills and what skills are important for specific jobs.

## The Importance of Being Honest

Present the following about the importance of honesty when describing criminal history even though it may make participants feel stereotyped or misunderstood.

“Without being straightforward, how can your employment gaps be described? What employer will be attracted by an applicant who “traveled a lot or “had my own business” (which “failed”), or a string of dead-end jobs with little to show? The bottom line is, your skills are enough. Even though you may not know what your skills are now, don’t worry, you have many skills that an employer will value, you just need to focus on what you do well- your strengths. Many drug abusers who have committed crimes face the same situation. Our goal here is to explore the value of being open to employers about your past.”

You should emphasize that there are good jobs for people with skills. Honesty is still the best policy even if turned down for a job due to a criminal past. If a person wasn’t honest, he or she may be fired once their employer does a background check. Facilitate a discussion about experiences with honesty and employment using the following questions:

*Ask:* “Who wants to talk about a time when you were turned down for a job—or maybe got fired from a job—because the employer found out you were a drug abuser?”

Encourage the group to share experiences. Take time to help the group see whether other factors—such as a lack of relevant experience, poor interviewing skills, better-qualified applicants, poor job performance—could have been the reason their job was lost. Also, examine how the disclosure was made, and what, if any, attempts were made to convince the employer the person was really clean. Help the group identify concerns an employer might have about the person and the position.

*Ask:* “How about positive experiences? Who got or kept a job even though your employer knew you were a former drug abuser or that you had a criminal history? Can you tell us about it?” Talk about how the disclosure was made as well as what other factors supported employment.

“One key to presenting your past is to become comfortable with your past and identify the things you learned from your experiences. A person who doesn’t take pride in his or her recovery probably won’t be convincing. If you present your record and what that means and move directly to your ability and dedication to do the job and do it well, you may be surprised with your success. Keep in mind that being successful requires using a resume and interviewing techniques.”

Encourage participants who have problems in their employment records to describe their concerns about discussing their criminal histories or their addiction and what they see as current options. Ask the group to think about these issues. Encourage participants to talk about their fears and ask if they have seen a copy of their record. If not, encourage them to get a copy and review it so they can be prepared to address questions.

Now distribute Handout 3: “Benefits of an Open Recovery” to discuss several benefits of being honest with employers and others about participants’ pasts.

### **What Can Employers Really Ask Me?**

There are Federal and State laws to protect drug abusers against hiring discrimination and against certain pre-employment inquiries about past drug and alcohol problems. It is important to know the laws that apply in your state to tell the group if the issue arises during the session. The topic of legal rights is relevant to this session, which encourages disclosures and finding an employer who is willing to hire a former offender.

Federal Law states that individuals who are currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs are not protected by discrimination laws. However, past alcoholism and drug addiction is considered a disability under federal law. According to the American Disabilities Act of 1990, employers may ask:

1. Information regarding the applicant’s ability to perform job functions.
2. Information regarding the applicant’s non-medical qualifications and skills, such as education, work history, and licensure.
3. For a general description of how the applicant would perform job tasks.
4. Information regarding arrest or conviction records.
5. Information regarding *current* illegal drug use.
6. If the applicant has ever used illegal drugs, but not the amount used.

Participants should expect that it is not a violation for an employer to use reasonable policies or procedures, including drug testing, designed to ensure that an individual is no longer engaging in the illegal drug use.

### **Talking About A Criminal Record**

“It is important to approach your job search by focusing on your skills first and then your record. However, at some point before you are officially hired, you will likely be required to discuss your criminal record. It is important that you know what is on your record, that you have had all dismissed charges removed from your record, and that you are clear about how many charges you had at the time of your arrest (not just the plea agreement or final judgment). Remember, many employers may not know how to interpret a criminal record. By being aware of the charges on your record, you may be able to avoid confusion.”

“Discussing your criminal record is important for you. Be prepared to tell your “story” honestly. There are several things to consider when giving your story. Did you make poor

choices? Has a decision to quit school prevented you from being able to compete in the workplace? Or, have you been unwilling to work because a lifestyle of dealing drugs was a faster, easier way to get cash? Regardless of your story, I encourage you to be prepared to talk about it. Be prepared to tell an employer what is different about you today. Why are you trustworthy today? How can they be sure you are a low-risk employee instead of a liability to the company?"

Before distributing Handout 4: "Telling the Story of Your Past," present the example story and prompt group members to tell their own.

### **What Employers Want to Know**

Often, employers will be interested in more than a person's criminal history. For this reason, it is important that to convey responsibility, motivation, trustworthiness, and that participants remain calm in the interview while sharing their past. There are several key questions a employer will be trying to answer from the application and interview:

- Will you show up to work every day and do your best work?
- Can you think quickly?
- Can you make immediate decisions?
- What values do you hold?
- Are you a leader?
- Do you stay calm or get easily rattled?
- Will you be a hard worker?
- Can I trust you?
- Will you quit without notice?

Emphasize that these qualities can be demonstrated even when disclosing a legal history. Discuss how certain ways of presenting themselves may make or break an interview before it even happens, as well as some other ways to make an employer feel more confident about their hiring choice.

### **Closing Comments**

Remember that even though it is required for participants to disclose their criminal past on a job application, this doesn't mean they won't be hired. The best way to share this information is to focus on skills first, and then discuss their past history. Therefore, participants should be familiar with the skills they have, so they can communicate those skills to an employer. There will be good jobs available to participants with skills. A good match for participants will be an employer who respects their honesty and who hires them despite their past.

**Session 3 Handout 1**  
**RATING YOUR SKILLS**

You may have several skills and not even give yourself credit for them. Skills can be found in the following areas. Rate yourself in the following areas using this scale:

1=Improvement needed, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Top Performer

- \_\_\_ Energy Level: Your sense of urgency, self-motivation, and enthusiasm.
- \_\_\_ Communication Skills: Your ability to listen well, express ideas, and accept feedback.
- \_\_\_ Hospitality: Your natural friendliness and customer service skills.
- \_\_\_ Reliability: Your dependability, attendance, self-discipline, and dedication.
- \_\_\_ Personal Pride: Your appearance, hygiene, and achievement.
- \_\_\_ Teamwork: Your cooperation with others and team spirit.

What achievements in your life are you most proud of?

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What are your personal strengths?

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What are your weakest areas?

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What are your five year goals?

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Why do you want to work here?

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When responding to these questions, keep in mind the importance of presenting skills, not personal information. For example, personally speaking, you may be proud of your children, but this may cause an employer to wonder how often you will be missing work to care for them. For a weakness, tell the employer how you create a plan of action when you identify an area of your life that needs work. Show that you are already on your way to solving the problem, or how they might be able to help you in that area. For example, if you would like to gain additional computer skills, does the prospective employer offer training to employees?

**Session 3 Handout 2  
SKILLS CHECKLIST**

<b>SKILLS</b>	<b>MOST OF THE TIME</b>	<b>SOME OF THE TIME</b>
Get to work every day		
On time every day		
Get things done		
Follow instructions		
Get along with co-workers		
Tell the truth		
Work hard		
Start work without being told		
Practice patience while doing job		
Ask for help if needed		
Learn quickly		
Be flexible if needs change		
Behave in a mature manner		
Dependable and reliable		
Give effort on the job at all times		
Solve problems when needed		
Friendly to customers and co-workers		
Good sense of humor		
Physical strength and willingness to use it		
Motivated to do well		
Creative, finds new ways to do things better		
Take positive leadership role when needed		
Enthusiastic; show excitement for your work		
Not easily defeated; keep trying when things get difficult		
Focused on results; will work until job is done		
Pride in a job well-done		
Be ready to learn new things		
Take responsibility		
Ask questions		
Other:		

**Your Top Three Adaptive Skills:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

(Source: Farr, 1995).



**Session 3 Handout 3**  
**BENEFITS OF AN OPEN RECOVERY**

1. You will not fear being “found-out”.
2. You will show that you are straightforward.
3. You will have an opportunity to acknowledge your drug abuse and criminal history and gain a chance to show how you have learned from the experience.
4. By presenting your story and experience up-front and presenting your employment history and skills, you can also present evidence of your ability.
5. You can discuss your life normally without having to be dishonest.
6. You can gain the trust of your employer.
7. You may be admired for your personal growth and achievements.
8. You may gain more support for your recovery and be able to ask for help more easily.
9. You can be a support to others with drug problems.
10. You might be surprised at how your experiences and insights can benefit others.
11. You will open up doors for more people—counselors, physicians, and community leaders, to recommend you for a job.



## **SESSION 4: ORGANIZING YOUR PAST WITH A RESUME**

### **Session 4 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Skills*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

What Is A Resume?

Why Do You Need A Resume?

What Should and Shouldn't Go on a Resume?

Preparing a Resume

A Closer Look at Resumes

Types of Resumes

Chronological Resume

Functional Resume

Combination Resume

Polishing it off with a Cover Letter

Three Things You Should Always Do In a Cover Letter

Writing the Cover Letter

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 4 Handout 1: RESUME: EDUCATION SECTION

Session 4 Handout 2: RESUME: EMPLOYMENT SECTION

Session 4 Handout 3: RESUME: PERSONAL SECTION

Session 4 Handout 4: RESUME: REFERENCE SECTION

Session 4 Handout 5: EXAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

Session 4 Handout 6: EXAMPLE FUNCTIONAL RESUME

Session 4 Handout 7: EXAMPLE COMBINATION RESUME

Session 4 Handout 8: EXAMPLE COVER LETTER

## **SESSION 4 ORGANIZING YOUR PAST WITH A RESUME**

### Message to the Employment Counselor:

The purpose of this session is to provide information about the format and content of a resume, and to develop a usable resume. A resume is a short document that describes your credentials for a job while emphasizing accomplishments. The employment counselor will be responsible for providing information on items to include in a resume, an acceptable style to use, and appropriate language to sell each resume. This session discusses and reviews two common types of resumes (functional and chronological) and how to successfully blend the two.

The use of a cover letter will also be discussed. A resume cover letter is used when applying for a job if the advertisement asks for a resume. A cover letter should provide a brief introduction and set the stage for the resume. This session focuses on motivating participants to draft, edit, and write a final cover letter that is adaptable for different job opportunities. The employment counselor should provide handouts and facilitate group discussion related to style, format, and content for a professional cover letter.

### Message to Group Participants:

“The goal of this session is to develop a usable resume. A resume is a personal data sheet that is typically one page long. Your resume should stress how your experiences, skills, and abilities qualify you for a particular job. You should remember that your resume is your chance to catch the employer’s attention. By following guidelines established in this session, you should be able to prepare a resume that will highlight your abilities as well as your character.”

“Your cover letter introduces you to prospective employers. It must be well written, designed to get the reader’s attention and interest, as well as convince the reader to interview you and consider you for employment. A cover letter should always be included with every resume you send to a prospective employer. Most employers expect a cover letter because it shows the type of initiative they want in an employee. It should be a short, one-page letter that introduces you and explains your qualifications for a specific job. Always tailor the content of your letter to fit each employer. It is important that you show an understanding of what the job includes. You also must point out the skills and abilities you possess that will be relevant to the company.”

### Session Objectives:

- Describe the resume; its use and purpose
- Discuss resume formats
- Select appropriate resume style and presentation
- Understand what should and shouldn’t be included on a resume
- Discuss drafting a cover letter

## Materials:

Handout 1	Resume: Education Section
Handout 2	Resume: Employment Section
Handout 3	Resume: Personal Section
Handout 4	Resume: Reference Section
Handout 5	Example Chronological Resume
Handout 6	Example Functional Resume
Handout 7	Example Combination Resume
Handout 8	Example Cover Letter

## Employment Counselor's Session Introduction:

“A resume is one of the major ways you can present yourself to an employer. Even if the job you are seeking doesn't require anything more than an application and an interview, having a good resume can help guide the interview process. Think of the job-hunting process as something that is made up of applications, resumes, and interviews.. Applications, resumes and interviewing are ways that you can help to paint a picture of the professional you want the employer to see. Keep in mind that you are not applying for a job as a drug addict—you are applying for a job as a person who has skills and experience to contribute. You are an investment to that employer and one of the best ways you can “paint” yourself as a good investment is by having a resume. Let's talk now about the importance of developing a good resume.”

Ask:

“How many of you have developed a resume?”

“How many of you have sent resumes to places and been called for job interviews?”

“Has anyone experienced frustration with not being called for an interview after sending a resume?”

## **What Is A Resume?**

“Try to think of a resume as a one page advertisement of your abilities, experience, and qualifications—your opportunity to make the employer want to talk to you. It's your first attempt at grabbing the employer's attention and persuading him/her to hire you based on your accomplishments. It is a great way to “sell yourself” to employers.”

## **Why Do You Need A Resume?**

“We all need a solid resume to give to potential employers. Even though the job application and resume contain similar information, a resume signals to the employer that you are serious about obtaining employment. A resume can also ease frustration and increase the effectiveness of a job search, by providing an organization of past work

histories and job skills. For the person who relies on a bus for transportation, a resume can save countless hours of waiting or walking back again.”

A resume can be used to:

- Mail to an employer
- Answer help-wanted ads
- Leave with an employer in response to an advertisement
- Leave with employers after an interview
- Inform references and referrals of your job goal and experience.
- Describe your qualifications
- Get an interviewer interested in you
- Land an interview
- Send with a cover letter or follow-up
- Give to anyone you know who might know of some appropriate jobs for you

### **What Should and Shouldn't Go on a Resume?**

Ask participants for suggestions about what should and shouldn't be included on a resume. Write on the board a list of items generated by the group.

Include:

- Education history
- Work history
- Special skills
- Hobbies/Interests related to employment
- Name, address, phone number
- Job goal
- Basic job qualifications

Don't Include:

- Date of birth
- Religious information
- Your marital status
- Clubs or affiliations not related to the job
- Personal Data

After finishing this list, discuss the items individually. For example, if “education” was mentioned under the “INCLUDE” column, allow the group to comment on why it would be important for the employer to know the applicant's education history.

### **Preparing a Resume**

It is unfortunate that many job seekers fail to have a resume or forward substandard ones to potential employers. Resumes do not have to be fancy or elaborate but they must be truthful, organized, and presentable. The following are guidelines for a good, basic resume:

- Brainstorm--skills, traits, interests, education
- Keep it brief--one page
- Use few words--only phrases

- Keep it positive--list accomplishments, growth, promotions
- Use action words--to convey employer benefits
- Personalize it--adjust job descriptions to job goals
- Organize the content--make it easy to read
- Make it neat--on clean white paper
- Have it typed--no handwritten or printed resumes
- Make it perfect--no spelling or punctuation errors.
- Pass it out--decide where, how, who

“Remember, this is your first opportunity to grab the employer’s attention. Employers receive lots of resumes in the mail on a regular basis. They give each resume a quick glance. If the resume is too long, too wordy, too cluttered looking, or too disorganized, it gets “filed” in the garbage. You want to make the employer want to call you for an interview (Hacker, 1999).”

### **A Closer Look at Resumes**

Resumes contain several pieces of information that are consistently presented in a similar way. Participants should be familiar with this format for the main sections of their resume. Remind participants that most information they will need to prepare a resume will be from their personal data sheet and personal skills lists from previous sessions. Distribute and discuss the following handouts to help develop the key sections of a resume.

Handout 1: “Resume: Education Section”

Handout 2: “Resume: Employment Section”

Handout 3: “Resume: Personal Section”

Handout 4: “Resume: References Section”

### **Types of Resumes**

Explain to the group that not all resumes are the same. The difference between each type of resume is the organization, the order of the sections, and the content. After each type is presented, spend time discussing which type is right for participants.

- Chronological--history by dates of employment.
- Functional--experience listed as skills.
- Combination--some dates, positions, skills.

### Chronological Resume

A chronological resume lists work experience in reverse chronological order (starting with most recent experience first), with descriptive text about each position held. This format is most commonly used (Hacker, 1999; Levitt, 2000).

#### *Advantages:*

- They are traditional and conservative, and therefore widely accepted.

- They clearly show what your responsibilities were in each position you held.
- They highlight the chronology of your professional development, which most employers want to see.
- They are easy to read.

*Disadvantages:*

- They do not allow you to highlight what you consider to be your most significant achievements or abilities.
- They do not allow you to capitalize on relevant, though nonprofessional experience.
- They do not allow you to compensate for special problems, such as a career change, job-hopping record, or inexperience in the field.
- They show gaps in employment due to the chronological listing.

*Most effectively used when:*

- Your work history shows progress
- You want to emphasize marketable, transferable skills
- You've worked for well-known employers
- You're applying for a job in a traditional field

Distribute Handout 5: "Example Chronological Resume" and discuss the organization of the information included.

### Functional Resume

Functional resumes highlight your skills and accomplishments rather than your work history. Accomplishments and skill areas are listed near the beginning of the resume, without necessarily indicating which positions produced the accomplishments and skills listed. Positions held are listed near the end of the resume in reverse chronological order, without descriptive text attached.

*Advantages:*

- They allow you to call attention to your achievements; to highlight what is unique about you.
- They allow you to indicate skills and accomplishments not necessarily related to previous employment.
- They can be used to de-emphasize special problems, such as lack of work experience or a career change.
- They force you to inventory your strengths and weaknesses, and thus provide extra preparation for the interviewing process.

*Disadvantages:*

- Employers might be annoyed that your work experience is not clearly delineated in chronological order.
- Employers might suspect that you are trying to hide something by using a functional format.



- Some employers find it hard to read.

*Most effectively used when:*

- You've had several jobs in a short period of time
- You've been demoted in job responsibility
- You've been unemployed for one year or more

Distribute Handout 6: "Example Functional Resume" and discuss the organization of the information included.

### Combination Resume

A combination resume combines the features of the chronological and functional skills resumes. Skills and accomplishments are featured, and work history is clearly displayed with descriptive text about each position held.

*Most effectively used when:*

- You want to emphasize your unique skills and accomplishments
- De-emphasize parts of your employment history

Distribute Handout 7: "Example Combination Resume" and discuss the organization of the information included.

### **Polishing it off with a Cover Letter**

The Employment counselor begins by asking:

"How many of you have written cover letters when applying for a job?"

"Why do you think it's important to send cover letters when you apply for a job?"

- A cover letter is like a handshake, it introduces you to prospective employers.
- It is your way to convince the employer to interview you and consider you for a job.

Ask: "When do you think a cover letter should be used?"

"A cover letter should always be included with every resume you send to a potential employer. Remember, an employer will usually see your application, resume, and cover letter before they see you. You can use the opportunity of a cover letter to explain how you became interested in the company and specifically how you will contribute to the organization. This is also a place to make reference to your resume so you can draw attention to specific parts of your resume."

Cover letters also:

- Often serve as your first introduction to a possible employer;
- Are a measure of your writing ability;
- Are a chance for you to give a quick picture of yourself;

- Allow you to show personal qualities such as self-confidence, organization; and thoroughness, and self-awareness of your worth;
- Can change an employer's mind who initially said s/he did not want to meet with you;
- Establish some job specifics, such as salary, geographic location, long term interests, and non-employment contributions you can make to the company;
- Win a favorable impression from possible employers that will be long-lasting and help you once you are released and/or land employment.

“Unless you are a writer, not many people enjoy writing the different letters that are part of the job hunt. However, the cover letter offers a great opportunity to compliment the resume and sell your skills.”

(Source: Levitt, 2000; Sull, 1998)

### **Three Things You Should Always Do In a Cover Letter**

1. **SHOW THAT YOU ARE INTERESTED.** You will show the person to whom you are writing that you are personally interested in the job.
2. **INDIVIDUALIZE EACH LETTER.** It allows you to individualize each letter to the specific situation. Employers especially appreciate you taking the time to address them specifically and relate skills that apply to their specific job.
3. **SELL YOURSELF.** Since your letter is usually your first contact with an employer, it gives you the opportunity to establish yourself as a mature, skilled, and confident person who knows how to communicate effectively.

### **Writing the Cover Letter**

Distribute Handout 8: “Example Cover Letter.” Discuss the following information using this example as a guide for participants. After each section of the cover letter, ask participants for specific ideas about what they might include. Encourage participants to give hints about their experience and character in the letter.

Begin with the **SALUTATION**. Salutations are important because they contribute to a favorable first impression. Whenever possible, address the letter to the contact person. “Mr. Smith, Mrs. Jones”. Avoid “Dear Sir” or “Dear Madam” or “To Whom it May Concern” if unsure if the contact is a man or woman.

Follow with the body of the letter. This includes three parts:

1. **The INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH-** The first paragraph will introduce the participant to the reader. This is the place to clearly explain why the participant is writing. It should include information about the job the participant is applying for and how the participant found out about it. (If there is anyone the participant can mention whose name may be familiar to the employer, by all means do so.)

2. The **INFORMATIVE PARAGRAPH**- This is where the participant tells the reader how he or she is qualified for this position. Connect experiences, abilities, and assets to those listed as desirable for the job candidate. Always stress good character traits like being a hard worker. This is where the participant will include the strengths that were identified earlier.

3. The **CLOSING PARAGRAPH**-This is the third and final part of the cover letter and should contain a specific request to meet and talk in person. Add more than just a general statement about getting back to the participant if they are interested. Tell the employer when and how the participant will be contacting him or her.

(Source: State of Kentucky, 1995)

### **Closing Comments**

A resume is one of the first impressions an employer has of a potential employee. Therefore, participants will want to spend time creating the best resume possible. The resume should be error free, neat, honest, and skills based. When completed with a cover letter, a resume gives participants a chance to explain why they are a good fit for the job. If participants take time to create a solid resume, employers may give more consideration to their application than job applications without resumes.

**Session 4 Handout 1**  
**RESUME: EDUCATION SECTION**

List your most recent degree or educational status first, followed chronologically in reverse order with other academic accomplishments. If you have an advanced degree, it is not necessary to list back to your high school graduation. If you have a bachelors or associates degree, then it is recommended to list your high school graduation. This is also the section in the resume where you can list training seminars or brief post graduate course work undertaken that enhances your abilities for the job you are applying. The following examples are offered:

- 1978            Lake Erie College, Painesville, Kentucky  
                  B.S. Education
  
- 1974            Newbury High School, Newbury, Kentucky  
                  Graduated College Preparatory
  
- 1990            Bayside High School, Greenville, Kentucky  
                  Graduated General Studies
  
- 1986            Mountainview High School, Keene, Kentucky  
                  Graduated Vo-Ed, Cosmetology
  
- 1989            Burnside Adult Career Center, Burnside, Kentucky  
                  GED
  
- 1990            Hartville Company Hazardous Materials Seminar, Hartville, Kentucky

List the following:

**High School**

Full name of school \_\_\_\_\_

Location: City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Date of graduation:

College Preparatory \_\_\_\_\_

General Studies \_\_\_\_\_

Voc-Ed in what field \_\_\_\_\_

**Post High School** (If you attended more than one institution, list chronologically.)

Full name of college or university \_\_\_\_\_

Location: City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Date of graduation \_\_\_\_\_ Degree(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Honors? \_\_\_\_\_

**Post High School** (If you attended more than one institution, list chronologically.)

Full name of trade or technical school \_\_\_\_\_

Location: City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Date of graduation \_\_\_\_\_ Certificate; or License in \_\_\_\_\_

or seminar in field of \_\_\_\_\_

sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_

**Session 4 Handout 2**  
**RESUME: EMPLOYMENT SECTION**

Although it is important to be accurate and concise with all resume sections, it is most important in the EMPLOYMENT section. Make certain there are no unexplained time gaps between employers. Make sure employment dates, titles, responsibilities, and accomplishments are precise.

Complete the following to help you in drafting this section of your resume. Begin with your current or most recent employer and list chronologically in reverse order a sufficient number of entries to support your career experience. If you have been in the work force for ten or fifteen years and have had a number of different employers, it may not be necessary to list your employment history back to its beginning. These points may be covered, if necessary, during your interview.

Company's complete name \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of employment from (m/y) \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ to (m/y) \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Your title \_\_\_\_\_

Description of duties

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Accomplishments (major achievements over and above your daily job duties. Be short and to the point -  
-this is where you can really impress the reader)

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Company's complete name

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of employment from (m/y) \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ to (m/y) \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Your title \_\_\_\_\_

Description of duties

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Accomplishments (Include major achievements over and above your daily routine. Be concise--this is where you can really impress the reader)

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**Session 4 Handout 3**  
**RESUME: PERSONAL SECTION**

This section of your resume contains a brief summary of your military history, hobbies, and community involvement. Some examples are:

Born Newport, Kentucky. Enjoy reading and travel. Active member in local PTO.

Born in Newport, Kentucky. Honorably discharged from Marine Corp July 7, 1990.

If you have any hobbies or community activities that can be considered attributes to the job responsibilities for the position you are applying, then you should list them. For example if you were applying for a position as a full time cook:

Born in Newport, Kentucky. Enjoy reading and travel. Volunteer cook at the local community help center serving 80-125 meals every Sunday afternoon.

In addition to, or in place of the above examples, you may choose to write a brief passage of your immediate contributions to the company you are applying. For example:  
I enjoy a progressive work environment, one where I can apply my skills immediately, or available for any shift.

What would you want your PERSONAL section to include?

Military history

\_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies

\_\_\_\_\_

Community activities

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to relocate? \_\_\_\_\_

Now write out your PERSONAL statement. Write it several times until you are satisfied with its content and appearance.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Section 4 Handout 4**  
**RESUME: REFERENCE SECTION**

An important part of your resume is the reference section. *References can be a critical factor in hiring you.* Be prepared to provide, when requested, a list of individuals who know your work ethic and skills and would be willing to discuss your character and strengths with a potential employer. Make sure these people know you have listed them as a reference so they will be prepared when the potential employer contacts them. Even if you can't get a favorable reference from a former employer, there are other people who could provide a reference. It is important that you have someone who knows you well to give a good reference.

The common practice is for the employer to narrow down the list of applicants to only one or two persons and then as the last step to contact references. If the employer cannot easily contact the references for one applicant, hiring is delayed or he or she may simply then try to contact the references listed by another applicant. The result is that the job is not filled right away, or the excellence is never discovered. Therefore, references should be reliable, easily contacted, and information about them should be accurate, complete, and up-to-date.

Please list 4 persons whom the employer can contact for a reference for you. Please do not include relatives.

1) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Full mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time known \_\_\_\_\_

2) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Full mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time known \_\_\_\_\_

Reference list continued:

3) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Full mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time known \_\_\_\_\_

4) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Full mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time known \_\_\_\_\_

**Session 4 Handout 5**  
**EXAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME**

**CHRONOLOGICAL:** Describes your work history based on the dates you held jobs-starting with the most recent job. Highlights companies, dates, and achievements. Usually your most recent job gets most of the attention.

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WILLIAM SMITH  
1436 Lee Avenue  
Lexington, Kentucky 45181  
(214) 631-2875

<b>JOB GOAL</b>	Would like to train for a skill while on the job. Learn quickly and willing to do any type of work.
<b>WORK EXPERIENCE</b>	Acquired the following experience during summers, while attending school, and after leaving school.
05/30/2002	Groundskeeper with Municipal Park Department in Clarksville. Worked with crew to clean up public parks, mend fences, and maintained buildings.
03/02/1999	Self-employed handyman. Performed jobs such as snow removal, preparing gardens for planting, delivering advertising door-to-door.
02/26/1997	Delivery person and stock clerk at Standard Supermarket, Inc.
06/17/1996	Stock clerk for Wells Pharmacy. Took inventory, notified owner of merchandise to order. Maintained store area.
<b>EDUCATION</b>	John Paul Jones High School
<b>PERSONAL</b>	Excellent health. Will relocate if public transportation is available. Will work outdoors or indoors. Have a valid driver's license.

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**ADVANTAGES:** Employers are familiar with the format. Easy to organize. Shows you can keep a job once you get it. Gives interviewers a format to follow.

**DISADVANTAGES:** Highlights employment gaps and job-hopping. When re-entering the job market your last job may not have been recent. Job skills are not highlighted unless in your most recent job.

**ZACHARY CURTIS**  
**35 WEST HARBOR ROAD**  
**LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY 40566**  
**(606) 555-1386**

**OBJECTIVE:** SERVICE TECHNICIAN in an Automobile Dealership.

---

**HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS:**

- Relate easily with all levels of Co-workers and Customers
  - 7 years hands-on experience with Automotive Electronics
  - Adapt readily to Domestic and Foreign Car Repair
  - Responsible, Capable, and Hardworking
- 

**EDUCATION:** GED earned 1987

**ADDITIONAL RELEVANT COURSE WORK:**

Automotive Inspection Training

**WORK**

**EXPERIENCE:** **AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR BUSINESS** 1990-Present  
Repair, rebuild and maintain over 100 foreign and domestic  
automobile engines annually

**AUTOMOBILE MECHANIC** 1987-1989  
Rosco Service Station Brighton, KY

Provided general and preventive maintenance on foreign and  
domestic automobiles  
Interacted with customers

**SALES & SERVICE, PARTS DEPARTMENT** 1986

Ordered parts needed for repairs of foreign and domestic automobiles

**REFERENCES:** Professional References Available Upon Request

**Session 4 Handout 6**  
**EXAMPLE FUNCTIONAL RESUME**

FUNCTIONAL RESUME: Describes your work experiences by grouping them into skills, highlighting accomplishments. Gives you the opportunity to call attention to specific skills or training.

---

JOHN C. JONES  
1020 Main Street  
Park City, OH 44222  
(216) 555-1212

JOB GOAL To obtain a position with a company that will allow me the opportunity to advance and utilize my current skills.

MAINTAIN FACILITY  
CLEANLINESS

Sweep, mop, scrub and polish floors with any type of surface. Polish furniture and fixtures. Clean lavatories, cafeterias and rest area.

STAIN AND TRASH  
REMOVAL

Skilled at removing dirt, stains, and oil from wood, tile, cement and carpeted floors. Remove trash and waste from premises.

INVENTORY CONTROL

Inventory, order and replenish storeroom supplies required to maintain physical appearance of facility.

LIGHTING  
MAINTENANCE

Replace light bulbs in both internal and external fixtures. Maintained facility.

EDUCATION

Carter High School

PERSONAL

Willing to work outdoors and indoors. Valid driver's license.

---

ADVANTAGES: Highlights skills in demand by employers. Hides job-hopping.

DISADVANTAGES: Many employers don't like this format, and think it's used to disguise a poor work history or lack of experience. Doesn't allow you to name companies, organizations or previous employers.

## Handout 6, page 2: A Sample Functional Resume

*Note: William Johnson has a poor work record and not much education or formal training. But he makes the most of the past. Imagine what his resume would look like if he didn't admit to being an ex-addict.*

**WILLIAM JOHNSON**  
**100 Maple Street**  
**Dover, Kentucky 40588**

**OBJECTIVE:** I would like to become employed in a position that is challenging, and provides the opportunity to learn new skills while helping others. My goal is to prove myself as a valuable employee.

**VOCATIONAL INTERESTS:** Construction, remodeling, and home appliance repair.

**SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:**

- Good understanding of carpentry basics, mechanical work, and numbers.
- Have mastered various precision machines for major manufacturer.
- Work capably as clerk shipper and retail sales representative.

**PERSONAL INFORMATION:** I volunteer part-time as a carpenter at the YMCA, where I also help coach a boys' basketball team. I also have learned to help other people overcome their drug and alcohol problems, which is something I deeply care about.

**Session 4 Handout 7**  
**EXAMPLE COMBINATION RESUME**

**JANET Y. JONES**  
2600 Springs Road  
Laughter, Kentucky 65432  
(606)543-7809

**OBJECTIVE**

Obtain a position in the office technology field.

**SUMMARY**

Twenty-two years of experience in warehouse operations. Skilled in word processing—WordPerfect, spreadsheets—Lotus 1-2-3, and data entry- 15,000 keystrokes per hour. Highly recognized as a self-starter with the ability to learn quickly.

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

- 1981-1993      Sears Company, Atlanta, Georgia
- **Barcoder.** Input informational data. Prepared catalog merchandise labels for mechanized scanning systems. Performed routine work with accuracy.
  - **Seasonal instructor.** Trained new employees and inspected new employee work performances during the six month peak period.
  - **Merchandise Handler.** Handled and maintained flow of merchandise under 60 pounds by hands. Unpacked and sorted incoming merchandise. Checked items and packing slips for accuracy.
  - **Mail clerk.** Received incoming correspondence. Checked, sorted, and distributed to designated departments.
  - **Packer.** Sorted and packed merchandise for shipment. Inspected for damages, replaced and replenished inventory.

**EDUCATION**

ITT Technical Institute, General Office Technology, 1993  
Sears Career Redirection Center, Computer Enhancement Skills Program, 1991  
Owen County High School, 1989

**Session 4 Handout 8**  
**EXAMPLE COVER LETTER**

September 21, 1999

Box A-185  
Kearney Daily Globe  
P.O. Box 1988  
Kearney, Kentucky 43848

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I would like to apply for the Secretarial position as advertised in the Kearney Daily Globe.

As you will see by my attached resume, I have experience dealing with the public. I enjoy working with the public and am a “people person” who can generally get along with anyone I meet. During my employment as a secretary for the City of Kearney, Kentucky I learned how to run an office independently when my supervisor is not there. Therefore, I am hard working and can complete tasks once I see they need to be taken care of. I have had additional experience greeting the public while working at Teen Challenge of the Midlands and was trusted with daily bank deposits and to keep the books. My co-workers regarded me as being conscientious and detail oriented.

I can be reached at (859) 555-0000 to schedule an interview or you may leave a message for me at (859) 111-1111. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss this exciting opportunity to work with you.

Sincerely,

Nancy Short

**Questions for thought:**

*What does this letter tell you about this person?*

*Is she trustworthy?*

*Do you think she is capable of doing a good job?*

*What kind of picture has she “painted” for a potential employer?*



## **SESSION 5: COMPLETING AN APPLICATION**

### **Session 5 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

Why are Applications Important?

Preparing an Application

Troubleshooting Application Dilemmas

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 5 Handout 1: APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Session 5 Handout 2: FILLING OUT A JOB APPLICATION FORM

## **SESSION 5**

### **COMPLETING AN APPLICATION**

#### Message to the Employment Counselor:

The objective of this session is to help participants develop skills to complete a job application. Many people underestimate the importance of a job application. This underestimation, along with poor work histories and no references, are common barriers for participants who do not complete job applications successfully. Employers use the application to obtain this standard information from all applicants. Many job seekers think of the application as a formality. It is critical to be sensitive to the importance of the application while encouraging participants to work on building positive employment experiences. Everyone has to start somewhere and with each new experience, the application can be further developed.

#### Message to Group Participants:

“Filling out a job application form provides the opportunity to highlight and sell your skills. Applications come in different formats, and within legal limits, may ask a variety of questions that are important for getting a job. Employers are entitled to ask only questions that are job related on application forms. An application form is used by the employer to screen job applicants. The application form represents you.”

#### Session Objectives:

- Help participants understand the importance of a job application.
- Help participants respond honestly on job applications.
- Educate participants about the do's and don'ts of filling out an application.
- Help participants prepare polished job applications.

#### Materials:

Sample Applications from local businesses

Handout 1 “Application Overview”

Handout 2 “Filling Out A Job Application Form”

#### Employment Counselor's Session Introduction:

“Most, if not all, of the information you will need for an application comes directly from your resume. Filling out a job application is easier once you have prepared a resume. Therefore, we are also going to discuss some hints for filling out job applications such as ways to handle difficult or tricky questions, as well as going through your resume so you can transfer your personal information directly onto any job application.”

## Why Are Applications Important?

“There are many ways to contact an employer before you are asked for an interview. Resumes, cover letters, and neatly printed job applications are often the gateway to employment. Many times, people overlook the importance of a job application, yet they are extremely important since they are the first step in the process of obtaining a job. Applications are used to determine who gets an interview, and interviews determine who gets a job.”

## Preparing an Application

“When filling out an application, make sure you NEATLY print your responses in blue or black ink. This allows the employer to see your attention to detail, work/education history, special skills, abilities, and personal strengths. Therefore, you should answer each question COMPLETELY.”

“When filling out an application, there are several broad ideas to keep in mind.”

Distribute and discuss Handout 1: “Application Overview.”

“Now that you have the application basics down, we will discuss how to complete specific sections on the application.”

Distribute Handout 2: “Filling Out a Job Application Form,” and go through the do’s and don’ts of completing applications.

## Application Dilemmas

Discuss the following dilemmas. Allow participants time to suggest possible solutions to these job application problems.

*Marty*

“Marty goes to Wal-mart to fill out a job application and realizes when he gets there that he has his reference information at home and that he does not have a blue or black ink pen with him. What would you suggest to Marty?”

*Pete*

“Pete is 32-years-old and has two children and a wife. He is very nervous about filling out job applications because he has trouble reading. Usually he has a friend help him but the rule at the company where he is applying is that all applications must be filled out on the premises. What should Pete do?”

In both of the above situations, lack of planning seems to be the problem. Failure to plan may impede the job search process. How might these two different job applications look?

Use the rest of the session to help participants complete the job applications they brought today, or distribute applications you collected from local businesses. You will need to answer questions they may have about application items.

### **Closing Comments**

Completing a job application is an important step in obtaining a job. Once a resume is completed, the majority of the information can be transferred to a job application. This means time won't be wasted searching for the information, or having to leave blanks because the information isn't available when completing the application. Filling out a job application honestly, completely, and neatly best guarantees the employer will give the application consideration for a job.

**Session 5 Handout 1**  
**APPLICATION OVERVIEW**

(Source: Taylor, 1995)

- If possible, take the application away from the place of business. Make a copy of it to practice and make mistakes on, then fill out the original and return it to the business.
- Have information available. Don't erase, scratch out, or leave any blanks on a job application.
- Follow directions completely. If you don't understand a question ask for help.
- Print answers and make sure they are legible.
- Answer as fully as possible.
- Don't leave any blank spaces. For questions that do not apply to you, draw a line or write n/a.
- Use only positive information. If the response is negative or requires an explanation, write "will discuss in interview." Avoid negative words such as "quit" or "fired."
- If your work history is long and varied, attach a resume.
- Be prepared to use ink or type the application.
- Be completely honest. Misrepresenting yourself on a job application form may result in being fired at a later date.
- If the application asks for your signature (most do), sign your name, as you would sign a check. Do not print it.
- You may need a list of 2 or 3 references, people who can vouch for your character, and their addresses. Usually these must be persons other than your family or former employers. Get permission before giving someone's name as a reference.
- If possible give two telephone numbers where you can be reached. If you give a friend's, a relative's, or a neighbor's phone number, make sure everyone in that household knows about it and agrees to take messages for you. Then check with them at least once per day.
- Check the application for mistakes or ask someone else check it before you submit it.

**Session 5 Handout 2**  
**FILLING OUT A JOB APPLICATION FORM**  
(Source: Taylor, 1995)

Filling out an employment application is an opportunity to sell yourself. Application forms come in all shapes and sizes, and within legal limits may ask a variety of questions. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in employment because of race, color, religion, or national origin. Public Law 90-202 prohibits discrimination because of age. Employers are entitled to ask only questions that are job related on application forms. An application form is used by the employer to screen in or screen out job applicants. Your application is you. It should be neat, complete, accurate, and easy to read. Your application can “tell others” about your habits and your ability to follow directions.

Some questions on an application can be tricky. You do not have to answer any question which you feel is too personal. You can write in “will discuss” and speak directly to the interviewer or draw a line in the question blank to show that you read it.

The following are some application questions can easily screen you IN or screen you OUT:

**Dependents**

- Out: This asks you how many members of your family need you to take care of them. A possibility of you missing work to care for family members is an important consideration.
- In: On the application form you could write in something like “receiving child care” to show that you will be able to come to work every day.

**Marital Status**

- Out: Avoid words like “divorced” or “separated”.
- In: Simply write in the words “single” or “married”.

**Telephone Number**

- Out: Don’t write “no phone”.
- In: Use the number from your resume or a reliable telephone number to receive messages.

**Work References**

- Out: Do not indicate what a former employer might say if you were fired from a previous job.
- In: Call the former employer and describe what you have accomplished in the recent past. Then ask for their assistance.

If the former employer refuses to help, try one of the following:

- Option #1: Go to personnel or the human resources department

Ask the Personnel Department at your old job to describe what they would tell a new employer during a reference check. If they won't tell you or if it is negative, then omit this job reference. If they will only give dates, then write in "Personnel", add the phone number for this department. Put this on the line which asks for the supervisor's name.

Option #2: List the job, but under "supervisor" write "will discuss"

During the interview you could identify some thing you enjoyed about the job. You might choose the following:

- I had a personality conflict with my supervisor. I regret this. I don't know exactly why it happened. It was probably both our faults.
- During the interview I have developed job expectations. When it turned out differently, I did not do well. I have grown as a result of this.
- I had some personal problems that I needed to look after. Now I am confident that I can give 100% to my next employer.

### **Unemployment compensation benefits received?**

Out: Writing "yes" when you worked two years or less. The concern may be that you will work only long enough to earn unemployment benefits and then you will quit.

In: Use phrases like "laid off after two years" or "cutback in work force". If it happened over five years ago, then put a line in the blank space.

### **Schooling**

Out: Responding "No high school diploma or no GED"

In: If you do not have an academic diploma, indicate that you are working on this and the date completion is expected.

### **U.S. Citizen**

Out: Avoid writing "no" or "foreign born" or "immigrant".

In: Legally entitled to work in the U.S., or "U.S. citizenship pending."

### **Position Desired**

Out: Do not list too many jobs, and do not write "anything". Do not use too narrow a term like "filing clerk".

In: Use a more general job title like "clerical support" or "clerk". This way, if there is more than one job opening you can be better considered.

### **Salary Desired**

Out: Do not over-price or under-sell your skills. Investigate and determine an appropriate salary.

In: Write in words like “open”, “negotiable”, “starting rate”, “normal rate, or “based on experience and training”.

### **Work Experience**

Out: Omit problems about quitting, being fired, employment gaps, or out-of- work and not in school.

In: Try to show what you did with all of your time. It is important to give dates that cover times when you did not work. Some examples are: self-employed—if you earned any money, travel, raised family, volunteer work, house remodeling, or education if you took classes. You can give general dates using years only or seasons instead of exact dates.

### **Reasons for leaving job**

Out: Never write “fired,” “Conflicts with the supervisor,” or “Job paid too little”

In: Find a reason for leaving that was personal. Things like: “moved”, “to seek more advanced opportunity”, “too far from home”, “cut back”, or “temporary work”. People rarely quit a job for one single reason. Pick the most positive reason.

### **Work or Personal References**

Out: List your work references and personal references before notifying them first.

In: Notify your work references and personal references. Tell them what work you are looking for and what you enjoyed about working for them. Ask for permission to use their names. Write “out of business” if appropriate. Use professional references that are willing to write letters of recommendation if they are contacted by an employer. Remember not to use relatives. Ministers, counselors, and other professional persons are all acceptable

### **Bondable**

This question refers to the practice of obtaining a type of insurance on employees who are in a position of financial responsibility. With a prison record, there are ways to get bonded.

Out: Responding with a “no”. This is sometimes an indirect question about your arrest record. It applies especially to arrest records of theft.

In: If you have any questions, check into federal and state programs that help ex-offenders. This information can be obtained from your local state employment agency. Then write “yes”.

### **Criminal Record**

Out: Responding by saying “yes”. The natural concern is that your past record will determine your future behavior.



In: Traffic tickets or parking violations do not count. Find out if your record is open to the public. Ask your probation officer or social worker. Many people prefer to leave this blank and explain their past and future goals in person. Some job counselors suggest writing in things like “not related to type of work sought” or “wish to discuss in person”. If your record is less than a felony or over five years old, simply put a dash to show that you read it.

### **Do You Own a Car?**

Out: Don’t respond with a “no”.

In: The concern is over your ability to get to work. So you can write something like: “No, use of public transportation as needed”. If a car is necessary for work, you could consider: “If required” and buy a used one.

### **Health History**

Questions about: Health, Disability, Treatment for drugs, Alcoholism, Mental Health.

This is part of your private life. If you believe that you cannot do the job then you should not apply. Simply write “no problem”. If you think your past problems may be known to the interviewer, then leave it blank and discuss it in person.

### **Days missed due to illness**

Out: “I don’t know”.

In: Round off to the nearest week in your favor (about 5 days). If you missed work for a problem you no longer have, then mention that you missed for illness by writing: “5 days missed due to illness”.

### **Disabilities or Handicaps**

You should write “none” unless you have some extraordinary condition that would prevent you from performing a normal job. As stated previously, almost all jobs can be performed quite adequately by motivated persons.

(Source: Parker, 1996)

## **SESSION 6: PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD: MASTERING THE JOB INTERVIEW**

### **Session 6 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

Appearance and Attitude

Answering Interview Questions

Turning Negatives into Positives

The Importance of Asking Questions

Discussing Interview Jitters

Possible Outcomes of an Interview

How to React Like a Professional

Deciding if a Job Offer is Right for You

Richard's Quick Job Acceptance

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 6 Handout 1: JOB INTERVIEW APPEARANCE CHECKLIST

Session 6 Handout 2: JOB INTERVIEW DON'TS

Session 6 Handout 3: TIPS FOR ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Session 6 Handout 4: COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Session 6 Handout 5: KNOW HOW TO TURN YOUR NEGATIVES INTO POSITIVES

Session 5 Handout 6: THE RIGHT JOB CHECKLIST

## **SESSION 6**

### **PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD: MASTERING THE JOB INTERVIEW**

#### Message to the Employment Counselor:

Job interviews work the same way as job applications-- to help “weed out” applicants. Image and appearance are among the first things the interviewer will evaluate-and first impressions (like the job application) can influence the decision to make a job offer. This session should provide participants with knowledge about interview etiquette and provide confidence and insight to ensure a successful interview (Levitt, 2000).

#### Message to Group Participants:

“It is important to consider what you should do during an interview to create a good impression and to help you get the job that is right for you. The interview will help the employer learn about your personal qualities and how you fit into the organization. The interview is important, especially the first 30 seconds because this is when the interviewer’s opinion about you is formed. Therefore, the first 30 seconds can make or break an interview. This session is designed to help you give a good first impression with your appearance and your attitude.”

#### Session Objectives:

- Help participants understand the importance of preparing for a job interview.
- Educate participants about proper dress and etiquette for an interview.
- Educate participants about the “don’ts” of answering questions during an interview.
- Help participants prepare questions to ask the interviewer.
- Ease participants concerns about the interview process.

#### Materials:

Handout 1	“Job Interview Appearance Checklist”
Handout 2	“Job Interview Don’ts”
Handout 3	“Tips For Answering Interview Questions”
Handout 4	“Commonly Asked Questions”
Handout 5	“Know How To Turn Your Negatives Into Positives”
Handout 6	“The Right Job Checklist”

#### Employment Counselor’s Session Introduction:

“At this point, we’ve covered a variety of topics and talked about how you can “paint a picture” for potential employers with your job application and resume. When you go to the interview you have the opportunity to make that picture of yourself a reality. Each of you should remember that you are looking for a job that is a good fit for your skills and personality. Therefore, it is important to be confident and present your skills without fearing judgment. The interviewer could be as nervous as you are! Remember- Once you

have the interview scheduled and your foot in the door, the way you interview will determine whether you get the job.”

“Researchers have found that the following are related to a job interview: Attitude (40%), image and appearance (25%), communication (25%), and job qualifications (10%) (Levitt, 2000). In other words, while your qualifications for a particular job may be important, they don’t outweigh your presentation during the interview. Candidates who sell themselves in the interview often get the job (Hacker, 1999).”

“To sell your skills in an interview requires preparation. A good way to prepare for an interview is to learn as much as you can about the organization and the person who will interview you. Locate as much information as possible about the job and what the company is looking for in a candidate. Armed with this information, a professional appearance, and winning attitude, you can feel confident during and after your interview.”

### **Appearance and Attitude**

“If you were going to hire someone for a job, what is the first thing you would notice about that person?”

Probe for answers: dress, shoes, and hair (Sull, 1998).

“Your appearance and behavior during an interview are important. You want to be able to compliment your skills with a professional appearance and attitude. This does not necessarily mean you need to wear a business suit to all of your interviews. It is most important that you are neat and clean when you dress for your interview. Examples of appropriate clothing for men might be khaki slacks, a button down shirt, and loafers. Women might choose to wear a dress or pantsuit, and good shoes. It is not necessary that you spend a lot of money on interview clothing, but it is best to not wear jeans, tank tops, shorts, or other very casual clothes to an interview.”

Distribute Handout 1: “Job Interview Appearance Checklist” and discuss other ways to make a good visual first impression.

“Your attitude during an interview should mirror your professional appearance. You should be polite and courteous during an interview. You can be polite by thanking the interviewer for agreeing to meet with you both before and after the interview, not talking while the interviewer is talking, or by simply answering all the questions when they are asked of you. Always remember you want to present your best self.”

“Remember to walk in a relaxed manner with your arms down to your side. Keep your chin up and SMILE. The key is to carry yourself like someone who has a good attitude and will do good work.”

Researchers (Levitt, 2000) suggest the following strategies in order to demonstrate a positive attitude:

- Project an air of confidence and pride.
- Give the employer a firm handshake before and after the interview.

- Remain relaxed.
- Walk with your hands at your sides, sit up straight, and smile.
- Carry yourself like you are the perfect person for this job.
- Demonstrate enthusiasm.
- Demonstrate knowledge of and interest in the employer.
- Perform at your best every moment.
- Concentrate on being likeable.
- Remember the interview is a two-way street.

Distribute Handout 2: “Job Interview Don’ts” and discuss what other types of things participants should be aware of not doing during an interview.

### **Answering Interview Questions**

“When you go into the interview, bring clean copies of your resume and remember what you said on your application. The interviewer will likely ask you questions about your resume. This is something you know about because it is about you and your skills. These things are important because they give the interviewer an idea of who you are and what you can offer. Some people may be uncomfortable with this openness but sharing this information is a very important part of the interview.”

The employer can see these qualities during an interview:

- Personality
- Listening Ability
- Confidence
- Self-Motivation
- Quick Thinker
- Honesty
- Work Style

“With this in mind, it will be useful to think of ways to professionally present your experiences in the interview. When answering interview questions there are several things to keep in mind to ensure a successful interview.”

Discuss and distribute Handout 3: “Tips For Answering Interview Questions.”

Explain the importance of being prepared to answer certain questions during an interview.

Discuss and distribute Handout 4: “Commonly Asked Questions.”

### **Turning Negatives into Positives**

“Everyone who applies for a new job may have some characteristics that make them appear less desirable to prospective employers. This can include things like never having a full time job, or being fired from a previous job. However, the good news is that these people still get jobs despite their past. The key is knowing how to turn your “weaknesses” into strengths for the employer.”

Distribute and discuss Handout 5: “Know How To Turn Your Negatives Into Positives.”

## **The Importance of Asking Questions**

“Even though your interview is stopping, this does not mean that you should stop making a good impression. There are times to ask questions during the interview, but it is especially important that you ask questions about the company and the job at the end of the interview (Sull, 1998). When you ask the interviewer questions, it shows your interest in the company.”

Ask the group for their ideas on good interview questions to ask before discussing the following possible questions.

- What responsibilities could I expect?
- What type of training is available?
- Why is this position available?
- How much travel is expected?
- How often are performance reviews given?
- Is there an opportunity for advancement?
- Ask for a business card. This will give you the information you need to thank your interviewer.

“These sample questions, and others should be asked. Asking these or similar questions will show an employer that you are not just “passing through.” You are truly interested in obtaining a job (Sull, 1998).”

## **Discussing Interview Jitters**

“Interviews can be scary. You are talking with someone you have never met, about your criminal past, and they have something you want- a job. Everyone has good and bad interviews. It is best to not get discouraged by the bad ones, and to get excited about the good ones.”

“If you think too much about the interview, it will increase your nervousness. If you go into the interview thinking, "I've got to get this job," "I'm not going to be nervous," or something similar, you probably will be very nervous, and your nervousness may prevent you from getting the job. On the day of the interview review some of your notes, but walk into the interview with a casual business attitude, not one that is "up tight." Reassure yourself with positive thoughts.”

## **Possible Outcomes of an Interview**

Encourage discussion and brainstorming of possible outcomes of an interview as listed below (Sull, 1998).

- (1) The interviewer tells the person that he or she would like the person back for a second interview.

- (2) The interviewer tells the person there may be a second interview and will be contacted if the company wants to see him or her again.
- (3) The interviewer tells the person this is the interview upon which the job will be decided, and will receive notification of the decision.
- (4) The person is offered the job after the first interview.
- (5) The interviewer tells the person that he or she is not a good fit for the job.
- (6) The person decides, after the interview has been completed, that the job is not right, and declines to go any further.

### **How to React Like a Professional**

Discuss with the group appropriate responses at the end of an interview (Sull, 1998).

- (1) “Whatever you do, don’t criticize your former employer. No matter how much you may dislike the person or the job, there’s no need to “burn any bridges.” Future positions may open for which you are more suited and you may wish to apply again.”
- (2) “If offered the position, unless you are positive you want the job, ask if you could have a day (or more, depending on the responsibilities and salary involved) to think it over. More reasonable decisions can be made away from the emotion of the interview. Don’t forget: there may be some aspect(s) of treatment that may interfere with the hours you would be expected to work. So, it’s best to check this out first.”
- (3) “If the interviewer says something like, “Thank you very much for your interest—we’ll be in touch.” Don’t be afraid to ask, “What’s the next step in the process?” Remember: You are as important as the interviewer!”
- (4) “Ask for a business card from the interviewer.”  
“A card can:”
  - Provide a name and address for you to thank your interviewer.
  - Give you proof that you have been looking for a job.
  - May open a door for you to build a network (even if the job doesn’t work out).
- (5) “Shake the interviewer’s hand and say something like, “I want to thank you for the opportunity to interview for this position, it was a pleasure to meet you.””

### **Deciding if a Job Offer is Right for You**

After a participant has found several promising leads, evaluate each job using Handout 7: “The Right Job Checklist.” Distribute the handout. Every person who has a job and every person who

has a job possibility can fill out this checklist. For those who are considering more than one job, an assessment should be made for each job. Ask participants to share their reactions to the checklist. The checklist should be used as a way to identify parts of a job that might negatively affect the person's recovery. Explain that sometimes people take jobs that are not right for them. Discuss the implication using the following exercise.

Ask:

“What are some reasons why you might take a job that is not right for you?”

Probe for responses to write on the board.

Examples:

- Your need for a job may be urgent—Do you need to pay the rent, buy food, and pay your bills?
- You know the money is good.
- You have to work because of court or treatment.
- You may tire of searching for a job. Looking for a job, juggling your family and other responsibilities can be a challenge.
- You may give up hope that you will ever find a job that meets your needs.
- You may have a deadline to get a job.
- You may not realize that the job isn't right for you when you accept it.

These are all possible motivating factors that could lead a person to accept a job that isn't right. A person may need income immediately, but accepting any job offer conflicts with recovery could lead to some problems down the road.

### **Richard's Quick Job Acceptance**

“There may be situations where you will be exactly what employers want, but you won't be sure whether you want to work for them. Let's discuss what might happen if you accept the first offer that comes along.”

*Richard:*

“Richard recently took a job that didn't interest him because it was his first job offer. Rather than taking more time to look for a better job, he accepted the job. He lasted only 2 months before he was fired because he missed work, did personal business during work, and got caught “goofing off” when he should have been working. He was bored and not interested in his job, but he didn't want to look for another job. His boss got tired of his excuses and fired him.”

“Although Richard never liked his job and told all of his friends that being “let go” from his job was the best thing that happened to him, the job loss left him feeling bad and with lower self-esteem. He was in a situation he hoped to avoid for a while longer—looking for a job. Now, he has to account for those 2 months he spent at the



job without being able to provide a good reference. Suddenly just taking any job didn't seem like such a good choice. In fact, he just created more problems for himself."

(Source: Hacker, 1999)

Discuss the following points after Richard's story is presented.

1. "What do you think was Richard's first mistake? He accepted the first job he was offered instead of putting more effort into finding a better job."
2. "What do you think Richard could have done differently to improve the situation when he realized that the job was not interesting?"
3. "If you had been Richard's supervisor, what would you think of Richard? Could you, as the supervisor, have changed the situation before firing Richard?"
4. "Have you ever had a job that you weren't interested in? For example, a job where the first thing you did when you would arrive in the morning was to count the time until lunch or a break? Did you have any problems that probably came out of your boredom?"
5. "How do you think Richard's feelings would affect his recovery efforts?"

If time permits, ask for a volunteer to do a mock interview with you. Encourage the other group members to provide suggestions if the "interviewee" gets stuck.

### **Closing Comments**

During a job interview, the employer decides whether a participant would be a good person to work with. The best way to make a great first impression is to have a good attitude during the interview and to have a clean and professional appearance. If participants are familiar with their criminal past, they will feel more relaxed when presenting it in their interview. If participants can emphasize growth and change, while being honest about their past, the interview will help participants receive a job offer.

**Session 6 Handout 1**  
**JOB INTERVIEW APPEARANCE CHECKLIST**

1. Clothes appropriate to the type of job \_\_\_\_\_
2. Clothes clean, wrinkle-free, and in good repair \_\_\_\_\_
3. Buttons buttoned, zippers zipped \_\_\_\_\_
4. Shoes polished and appropriate \_\_\_\_\_
5. No sunglasses \_\_\_\_\_
6. Hair clean and neatly combed \_\_\_\_\_
7. Hairstyle appropriate to the type of job \_\_\_\_\_
8. Body clean and odor-free \_\_\_\_\_
9. Teeth brushed \_\_\_\_\_
10. Preferably clean-shaven or beard or mustache neatly trimmed \_\_\_\_\_
11. Perfume or after shave lotion not too strong \_\_\_\_\_
12. Make-up not overdone \_\_\_\_\_
13. Clean hands and fingernails \_\_\_\_\_
14. Fingernails neatly trimmed \_\_\_\_\_
15. Tattoos covered if possible \_\_\_\_\_
16. Don't slouch \_\_\_\_\_
17. Sit straight \_\_\_\_\_
18. Smile \_\_\_\_\_
19. Good eye contact \_\_\_\_\_
20. Positive and enthusiastic attitude (Remember-it shows) \_\_\_\_\_

## **Session 6 Handout 2**

### **JOB INTERVIEW DON'TS**

There are several things that you shouldn't do during a job interview. These things include:

- Don't chew gum, smoke, or make nervous throat noises or nervous coughing.
- Don't get personal with the interviewer or with the receptionist. Examples of being too personal include calling the interviewer by his/her first name (unless you are told to), touching things on his/her desk, asking questions about pictures, and telling jokes.
- Don't cross your legs. Sit somewhat at the edge of your chair, leaning slightly forward (it gives the impression of your focused attention); either cross your legs at the ankles or not at all.
- Don't cross your arms in front of you, because it is perceived as a sign that you are bored or closed off to suggestions.
- Don't ever say negative things about a former or current employers or co-workers. This is a direct indication that it may be difficult to work with you.
- Don't appear too anxious for a job. You may want and, in fact, need the job desperately, but the confidence, strengths, and skills you've already displayed will be overshadowed by desperation.
- Don't ask questions related to salary, benefits, coffee breaks, or vacation time. This implies that you are more concerned about the money and benefits than the job or the company. Wait until you are offered the job before you negotiate these things.
- Don't bring your children or friends to the job interview. This may make an employer wonder if you are good at planning and problem-solving.

(Source: Sull, 1988)

**Session 6 Handout 3**  
**TIPS FOR ANSWERING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**  
(Sull, 1998)

1. Be short and concise when answering questions. Don't give too much detail.
2. Answer the question that is asked. Listen carefully. (For example; if someone asks for one thought about the job, give just one thought.)
3. Make good eye contact with the interviewer(s). This shows confidence.
4. Remain composed, don't fidget or appear nervous. It gives the impression you are not focused on the interview, or that you are uncomfortable.
5. Rather than worrying about giving the interviewer what you think he or she wants, be yourself.
6. Beware of the six deadly speech cousins: uh, um, right, you know, okay, and like. Don't mumble, don't speak too fast, pronounce your words clearly.
7. Think about what you are saying when you respond to questions. Don't be so quick to give an answer, but take a few seconds to be sure.
8. Keep a pleasant and positive tone of voice. If your voice fluctuates while giving an answer, it leads the listener to believe that you are unsure or afraid.
9. Keep your cool even if a question catches you off guard. If you say, "Hey, no problem--I get asked that all the time", you will give the impression of being in control even if you are sweating bullets inside. If a question upsets you (about your criminal record for example) remember to stay calm and positive.
10. When asked a question, don't repeat it, this only indicates to the interviewer that you are stalling for time or are not paying attention.
11. During the interview, it's good form to use the interviewer's name when addressing the interviewer. For example: "Mr. Jackson, I do have a question to ask." or "Ms. Franklin, I'm really interested in this job."
12. Show enthusiasm and smile; otherwise, you won't get the job. Interviewers want to hire someone who is really excited about the job opportunity, has a good personality, and really wants to work.
13. Focus on what you can contribute to the interviewer's company. Don't focus on your weaknesses or on what you can get out of the job.
14. Always be honest, even if you're not proud of the answer. If you are not honest, your lie will come back to haunt your credibility. Honesty will gain respect.

**Session 6 Handout 4**  
**COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Tell me about yourself.	In your lifetime, what was your greatest accomplishment?
Why do you want this job?	What was your worst disappointment?
What qualifications do you have?	At what age would you like to retire?
Why do you want to work for me?	Ever been convicted of a crime?
How did you learn about this position?	Do you have a drug/alcohol problem?
How many other companies have you approached?	Last month, how many days of work did you miss? Why?
What do you like and dislike about your current job?	Are you at your best when working in a group or working alone?
Why are you leaving your job?	How many times were you late?
How much notice do you plan to give your current job?	Would you rather be in charge of a project or work as part of a team?
How did that job prepare you for this job?	As a child, did you do anything to earn spending money?
Did you ever have a disagreement with your boss? What happened?	What would you do if one supervisor told you to do something now and another said do it later?
As a student, did you enjoy school?	Give me two reasons why I should not hire you.
Which class did you like the best? The least?	What do you like most about yourself? Why?
Did you join any school activities? Which ones?	What salary are you looking for?
Are you good at math? Can you add, subtract, multiply, divide, and calculate percentages?	Would you mind reporting to a supervisor who is a woman, a different race than yourself, or handicapped?
What were your grades in English?	Are you currently laid off from a job or waiting for a recall?
In school, when did you wait until the last day to begin working on assignments?	In your last job, how much overtime did you average each week?
What do you do to relax after work?	Have you ever been fired from a job?
What do you expect to be doing for work in the next five years?	Do you have any friends or relatives who work for us?
Give an example of a major problem you faced and how you solved it.	Can you think of anything I might have forgotten to ask you?

**Session 6 Handout 5**  
**KNOW HOW TO TURN YOUR NEGATIVES INTO POSITIVES**

(Source: Sull, 1998)

You may be very used to hearing and thinking these things about yourself. However, many of these “negatives” can actually be viewed as strengths to a prospective employer.

- **YOU ARE NOT A LEADER.** Most jobs require people who are able to accept guidance and carry out assignments. The fact that you are a capable follower is a strength.
- **YOU ARE INEXPERIENCED.** Newcomers have an open mind, are flexible, and don't need to "unlearn" habits formed on another job. You are also eager to learn.
- **YOU ARE APPLYING FOR YOUR FIRST FULL-TIME JOB.** You have no pre-conceived ideas about your work role, are prepared to learn what to do, to work within the employer's guidelines, and to put in whatever hours are necessary.
- **YOU WERE FIRED FROM YOUR LAST JOB.** Never blame your former employer in the interview. If the subject should come up, emphasize what you learned from the experience and how it has made you a better person.
- **YOU HAVE A DISABILITY.** A job is especially important to you. You are determined to do well both for your sake and the sake of your employers. In addition, you can always be depended upon to be at work on time and to get the job done.
- **YOU ARE SHY.** People who are shy tend to listen carefully and perform well because they can follow directions better than most. You do not easily get sidetracked, and focus intently on the work before you.
- **YOU DIDN'T HAVE VERY GOOD GRADES.** Perhaps school was only a part of your life and much of your learning took place, during extracurricular activities, on paid and volunteer jobs, and through community involvement. Often, achievements in treatment and the other activities may be a better predictor of success on the job than grades.
- **YOU ARE YOUNG.** Many careers begin with young people. Tell the interviewer you have the important energy and enthusiasm that go with youth.
- **YOU HAVE CHILDREN AND MAY HAVE TO LEAVE WORK RIGHT ON TIME.** There are few jobs as complex as raising children, and you have had to learn to handle many different kinds of things efficiently. You know how to, for example, work hard, establish priorities, be patient, and meet deadlines.

**Session 6 Handout 6**  
**THE “RIGHT JOB” CHECKLIST**

**Directions:** Use this list of questions when you receive job offers in order to help assess how appropriate the job is for you. If you answer “no” to a few of the questions, think about how you could resolve the issue.

As a former drug abuser who is ready for regular employment you'd be wise to look at each possible job situation and how well it meets your recovery needs. The following questions can guide you in that assessment. No job is perfect and some of the questions cannot be answered fully before starting a job, but it would be valuable to give honest answers to each question before accepting a job offer. Each “no” answer suggests facing and resolving the issue. Several “no” answers may indicate that even if employment opportunities are scarce, the one you are looking at isn't the right one for you.

Place a check to indicate your response to each question.

	YES	NO	?
Will the job have a take-home salary that is enough for your current needs?			
Will you have reliable transportation?			
Do you have a clear idea of what the job involves?			
Do you have or can you quickly learn the required job skills?			
Is the work environment safe and reasonably pleasant?			
Will the work be steady, year-round, and will you be paid regularly?			
Does the job include the supervision and evaluation necessary to support your performance?			
Will the job provide opportunities to increase your skills and/or offer advancement?			
Will you have coworkers who could become positive friends and people you could respect?			
Will you have what you need--including friends, recreational outlets, and free time--to handle job stress?			
Do you think the job will challenge you?			
Will your position remain secure when coworkers and/or your employer know your past?			
Will the workplace be free of situations, places, and people that in the past have strongly tempted you to use drugs?			
Will you have a person or counselor at the worksite you could go to when you have problems at work?			
Is the work consistent with your personal values and beliefs?			
Were you comfortable in the workplace?			
Will the company work around your treatment and/or court obligations?			

(Source: Zackon, McAuliffe, & Ch'ein, 1985)

## **SESSION 7: STRUCTURING YOUR TIME**

### **Session 7 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

Identifying Your Priorities

Using a Thought Map to Set Priorities

Making a To-do List

I Still Don't Have Enough Time

Frank's Hectic Life

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 7 Handout 1 IDENTIFYING YOUR PRIORITIES

Session 7 Handout 2 BLANK THOUGHT MAP

Session 7 Handout 3 ACTIVITY LOG



## **SESSION 7 STRUCTURING YOUR TIME**

### Message to the Employment Counselor:

The purpose of this session is to help participants understand the importance of time management. Managing time wisely requires a schedule that helps participants make progress toward their employment goals and recovery. Time management strategies include planning activities and scheduling time to complete these activities. Strategies discussed in this session can help plan ahead to meet obligations. Other strategies include helping participants to be on time to work, job interviews, and appointments.

### Message to Group Participants:

“Time management can be difficult when you have to balance the things you want to do with the actual time you have to do them. A good way to budget time is to develop a daily schedule with what you will be doing at different times of the day. Unless you are committed to making a schedule and sticking to it, you will not fully understand the benefits of time management. The more time you spend planning your time and activities, the more time you will have for those activities. Setting time oriented goals and eliminating activities that waste time, will give you extra time to spend on important people in your life and activities you enjoy.”

### Session Objectives:

- Discuss the importance of time management.
- Learn how to identify priorities.
- Use thought maps to set priorities.
- Develop a to-do list.
- Develop an activity log to track time.

### Materials:

Handout 1     Identifying Your Priorities  
Handout 2     Blank Thought Map  
Handout 3     Activity Log

### Employment Counselor’s Session Introduction:

Use the following questions to begin a general discussion on time management. Emphasize how time management can help alleviate some of the stress that comes from feeling like there is never enough time to get things done, and feeling angry when having to complete multiple tasks.

Ask:

1. “Think about all of the things you do in a typical week. Do you think you manage your time or does time manage you?”

2. “What is one thing we can do to avoid feeling rushed or overburdened by responsibilities?”
3. “How can planning ahead help us to avoid a crisis?”
4. “Do you feel that the same problems end up taking up a large chunk of your time?”
5. “Do you have trouble devoting the time you would like to family or friends?”
6. “How many of you feel that you have a good way of managing your time?” (For those that volunteer, ask them to share what it is.)
7. “How many of you struggle with time management?”
8. “What are some of the problems you’ve had at your job that relate to time management difficulties?”
9. “Why do you think people struggle with time management?”

### **Identifying Your Priorities**

“Everyone has 24 hours each day and 168 hours each week to eat, sleep, work, relax, exercise, and spend time with their families. No one has enough time but everyone has the same amount of time. There is nothing magical about getting the most from these hours. It takes planning.”

“In order to plan a schedule which will best manage your time, you will need to decide what your priorities are. You will then use this list of priorities to make a to-do list which will help you decide what tasks to complete when you are planning your day or are running out of time.”

Distribute and discuss Handout 1: “Identifying Your Priorities.”

### **Using a Thought Map to Set Priorities**

“Once you decide on your priorities, deciding which to take care of first may seem like a difficult task. After all, you’ve already decided they all are important. You may feel overwhelmed by everything you need to accomplish. The best way to complete all of your tasks in the most efficient way is to list them in order of importance.”

“One of the main reasons to order your priorities is because there simply isn’t enough time to complete them all at once. In order to create a ranked list of priorities, you will need to decide how much time it takes to complete each task. Then, you will be able to decide how many priorities you can accomplish during a given time frame.”

Ask participants to estimate how much time different priorities take and list responses on dry erase board or chart. The following are possible examples:

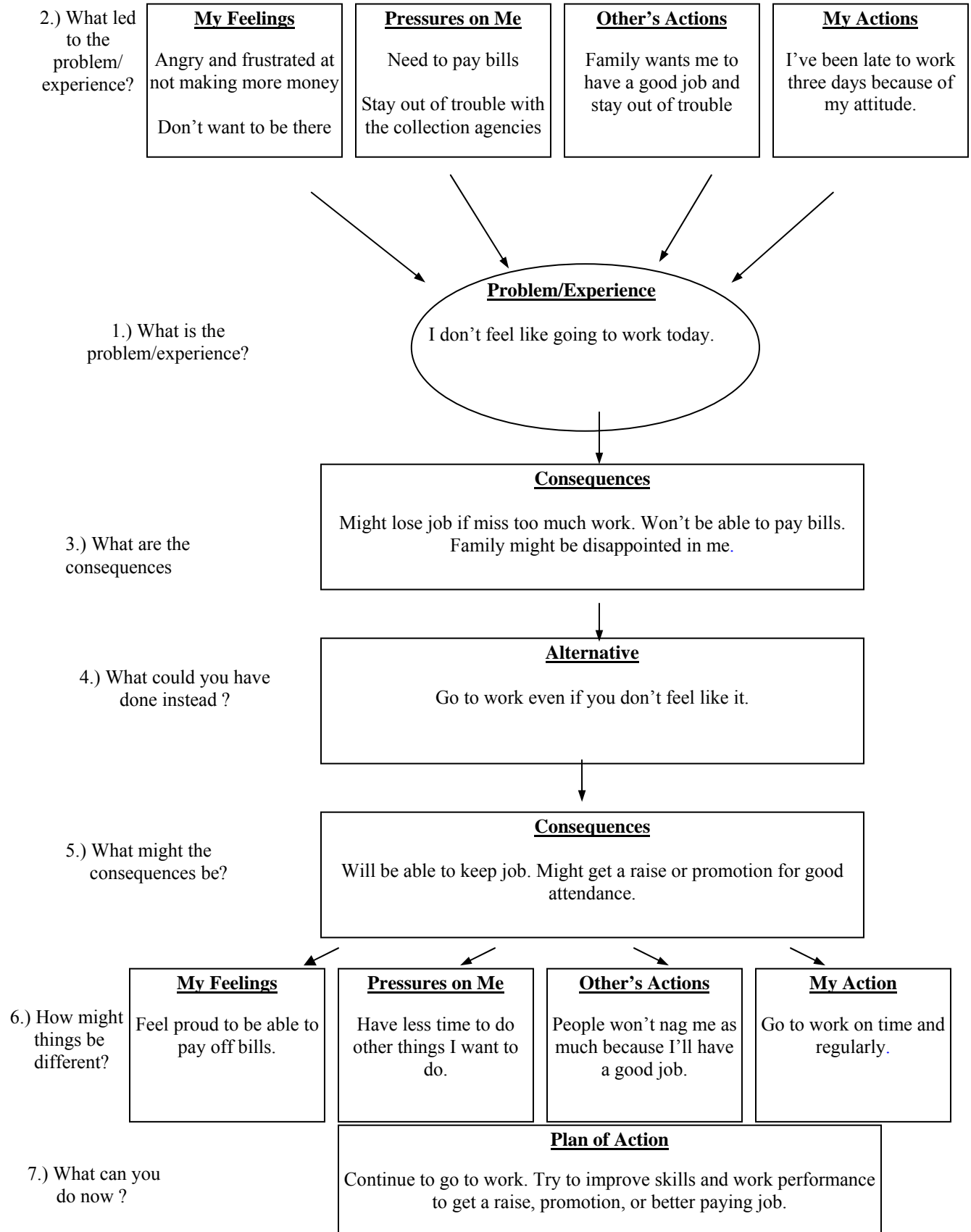
- Work
- Treatment group
- Grocery shopping
- Doctor’s appt
- Time with kids
- Housework

“Even though these activities take up time that you would rather spend doing something else, it may be important to consider them a high priority. One way to choose which

activities should top your priority list is to consider the long term consequences of finishing or not finishing the activity. For example, if there are negative consequences for not finishing a certain task, that task could be considered a priority. A good way to do this is to think through the consequences of not finishing the activity with a thought map.”

Distribute Handout 2: “Blank Thought Map”. Using the following completed thought map as a guide, help participants decide whether going to work is a top priority. Work through the consequences of not going to work. Have participants discuss, based on these consequences, whether it is to their benefit to go to work even if they don’t really feel like it. Help participants decide what types of activities might be a higher priority than going to work, such as a child’s doctor appointment or a family emergency, and how to deal with these priorities with employers.

## Court Requirement Thought Map



## Making a Daily To-do List

“Having a to-do list means several things. It will help you be organized so that you don’t forget important activities. You can feel less stress knowing you don’t have to accomplish everything that needs to be done in one day. A list also makes you feel accomplished because you are stepping up and taking care of things that need to be done.”

“Since a to-do list helps you plan your activities for that day, it may be helpful to jot down deadlines or the time of day when you plan to complete the activity. Your to-do list should include activities from your priorities worksheet and other priorities that come up each day. At the top of your list should be the task you decided was the highest priority from using your thought map. For example, if on Monday you have to go to work, go to the grocery, meet with your daughter’s teacher and pay the electric bill, your to-do list will include these tasks. At the top of your list will be the task with the highest consequence of not being completed. The rest of your tasks are less important and you can use a to-do list to help you decide when you will accomplish each. Your to-do list may look something like this:

### *Example To-do List:*

7:30 Write bill for electric company, Drop bill in mailbox for pick-up, Go to work  
12:00-1:00 Meet daughter’s teacher on my lunch break  
5:00 Run to grocery on the way home from work

“Completing these tasks early in the day will leave you more free time in the evening to do things you want to do, such as watching a favorite tv show or playing with your kids. The same principle applies to most to-do lists. If you get all your priorities taken care of on Saturday afternoon, then you have all day Sunday to relax and do things you enjoy.”

“When writing your to-do list, there are several general tips to keep in mind:”

### *Begin with the most important task.*

“Think about the things that will carry a long-term consequence if not completed. For example, if you must choose between going to work and taking a loved one to a pre-planned medical appointment, think about your priorities. Finding someone else to provide transportation to the medical appointment may save your job. Planning ahead may also allow you to speak with your employer about having time to attend this appointment.”

### *Do not put off important tasks.*

“Everyone knows that crisis situations do occur. Traffic and the end of a work day can be hectic and may cause us to forget what we need to do. Therefore, it is important to put first things first. If you know you have regular obligations that carry a long-term consequence, this needs to be done first. Not having to rush will make it seem like you have more time than you do.”

## **Estimate the amount of time needed to do a job to meet deadlines**

“Taking care of paperwork, paying fines, driving to the place you will have a job interview before the time of your interview to measure the distance, and considering the amount of free time you generally have will help you to complete tasks by the deadline. Consistently planning ahead by estimating the amount of time it will take to complete a task will help you prevent long-term consequences. Be flexible and plan well enough so that you can be more available if something unpredictable happens. (Example: such as your car breaking down ).”

### *Just Say No*

“Say “no” when you need to. For example, you may want to give someone a ride home, but if they live across town, the trip may take more time than you have to give. What are the consequences for you?”

### *Make time for leisure activities and sleep.*

“Knowing what you have to do each day will determine how much time you have left for leisure or fun. With planning, it is possible to include work, leisure, family time, and program obligations into your life. Recognize the importance of getting enough sleep and finding healthy, drug-free leisure activities. Taking the time to participate in activities you enjoy will help you feel more relaxed in your other activities and will give you something to look forward to. Finding the time to participate in a hobby or to play a sport is generally time well spent and can also help you develop new lifestyle habits.”

## **I Still Don't Have Enough Time**

“Many times, it may seem like certain activities, such as work, take up a majority of your time. However, by keeping track of the things you do in a day you may find that you have more free time than you think you do. If you still feel short on time, it may be that you are spending more time than you think being on “autopilot” and doing things without thinking about them. How do you spend your day? Your memory is not very reliable when it comes to assessing how you spend your time. For example, it is too easy to forget time spent talking to friends, taking smoke breaks, or watching tv.

“An activity log is a good way to monitor the way you spend your time. If you work from memory, it is easy to believe that you spent all your day working, and consider that your use of time is good. If you keep an Activity Log for a few days you may be surprised to see precisely how much of your day may be spent on certain activities.”

Distribute and discuss Handout 3: “Activity Log”. Have participants fill out these logs based on what their day yesterday was like. Have them find periods of “wasted time” in their day. Help participants identify where they may be able to save time. Explain that if a person truly does have too many obligations then it is time to decide what activities to cut out of their schedule.

## **Frank's Hectic Life**

Discuss the following story and develop a "to-do list" to better organize Frank's life. Discuss how frustrating it is to feel like other people are planning your schedule, and how this makes you feel like you have little control over your life. Explain that creating a to-do list is a time management technique to help gain some control back over your life. Have participants discuss where Frank might be wasting time and how he could use his time more efficiently. Discuss what benefits he will get from being more productive with his time. Make sure to suggest benefits that participants can gain from taking care of priorities. These benefits include feeling like they have their life under control, pride for being a involved family member, confidence in their abilities to meet life's demands head-on, and having time to do things that are enjoyable.

"Frank never feels that he has any time for himself. His construction job requires him to work long hours. The court requires him to attend one hour group sessions twice a week and one AA meeting per week. On a typical day, he gets up around 6:00am, goes to work, and gets home around 5:00 in the evening. When he gets home, he relaxes by watching TV for a couple of hours before heading off to a group or AA meeting. He hates that he has to spend his free time going to these groups when he has other things that need to be done. His lawn needs to be mowed. He has some minor repairs to do around the place where he lives. His car also needs a tune-up and he needs to go to the bank to apply for a loan, both of which have to be done during the hours he is at work. Frank also hasn't seen his girlfriend in a week because of his schedule. Frank is fed up with not having any time and wants the court to stop telling him what to do."

"How can Frank better organize his time with a to-do list so he doesn't feel so overwhelmed and angry and skips out on his responsibilities?"

## **Closing Comments**

"As you work to improve your employment situation, it may seem difficult to balance work and all your other obligations, such as family and other responsibilities. The key to handling these activities is to prioritize them according to importance, writing them down on a to-do list, checking them off, and then patting yourself on the back when they are done. It is also helpful to remember that treatment requirements are temporary. Giving up some free time now may enhance your recovery, so you have more free time later."

**Session 7 Handout 1**  
**IDENTIFYING YOUR PRIORITIES**

There are priorities that involve employment, such as being on time for work and working your entire shift. There are priorities that involve the home, such as spending time with family or making home repairs. There are also priorities that involve leisure time, which include doing activities you may enjoy and getting enough sleep.

In each of the three categories, choose five activities that you think are important to get done. When deciding if something is a high priority, consider the long term consequences of not getting the activity done. For example, not going to work on time may cause you to lose your job, or not spending some time doing something you enjoy may make you irritable and stressed out.

**EMPLOYMENT**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**HOME**

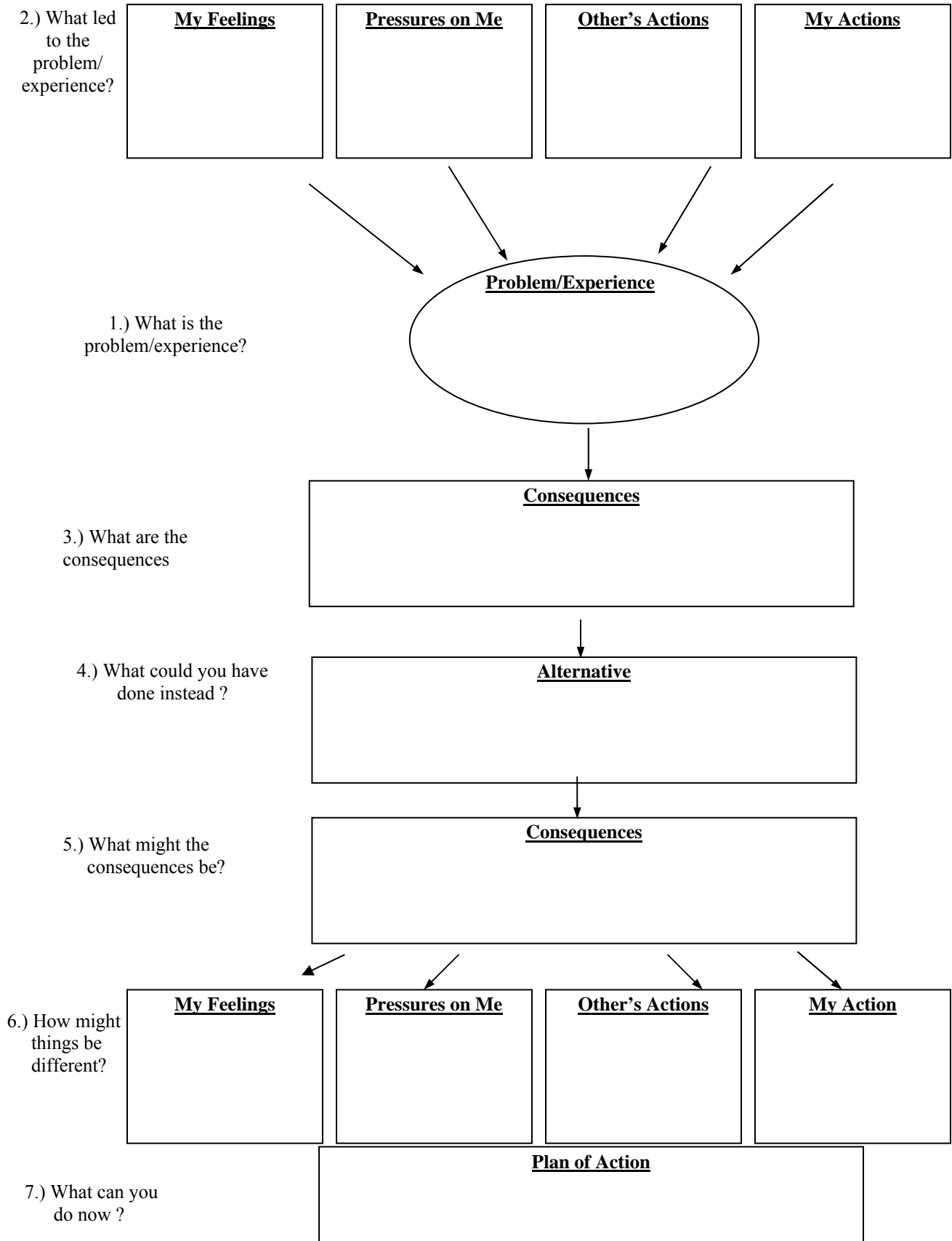
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**LEISURE**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



**Session 7 Handout 2  
BLANK THOUGHT MAP**



### Session 7 Handout 3 ACTIVITY LOG

#### ***DIRECTIONS FOR ACTIVITY LOG:***

On the Activity log, write the things you do as you do them, from the moment you get up in the morning. Every time you change activities, whether opening mail, working, making coffee, dealing with co-workers, gossiping, picking up paper from a printer, etc., write down the time of the change.

In addition to writing down activities, it is worth noting how you feel, whether happy, flat, tired, energetic, etc. This should be done regularly throughout the day.

Once you log your time for about three days, look at the log. You may be surprised to see the length of time you spend doing things like talking to colleagues, dealing with disruptions, or doing things that aren't important.

You may also see that you are energetic in some parts of the day, and flat in other parts. A lot of this can depend on the rest breaks you take, the times and amounts you eat, and quality of your nutrition. The activity log gives you some basis for experimenting with these variables.

Questions to ask yourself:

Did you complete your priorities for the day?

Did failure to complete any priority result in a consequence that robs you of more time?

Did you find that you have more free time than you realized?

**Session 7 Handout 3 Page 2**  
**ACTIVITY LOG**

7:00 AM	3:00 PM	11:00 PM
7:30 AM	3:30 PM	11:30 AM
8:00 AM	4:00 PM	12:00 AM
8:30 AM	4:30 PM	12:30 AM
9:00 AM	5:00 PM	1:00 AM
9:30 AM	5:30 PM	1:30 AM
10:00 AM	6:00 PM	2:00 AM
10:30 AM	6:30 PM	2:30 AM
11:00 AM	7:00 PM	3:00 AM
11:30 AM	7:30 PM	3:30 AM
12:00 PM	8:00 PM	4:00 AM
12:30 PM	8:30 PM	4:30 AM
1:00 PM	9:00 PM	5:00 AM
1:30 PM	9:30 PM	5:30 AM
2:00 PM	10:00 PM	6:00 AM
2:30 PM	10:30 PM	6:30 AM

## **SESSION 8: MANAGING YOUR MONEY**

### **Session 8 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

Developing a Budget

Where Does Money Go?

**Prioritizing Necessities**

**Paying Down Debt**

**Keeping Track of Spending**

**Keeping Your Money in a Safe Place**

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 8 Handout 1 WHY BUDGET?

Session 8 Handout 2 SPENDING FACTS

Session 8 Handout 3 WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

Session 8 Handout 4 PERSONAL BUDGET

Session 8 Handout 5 WORKSHEET METHOD

## Session 8 MANAGING YOUR MONEY

### Message to the Employment Counselor:

The purpose of this session is to help participants understand the importance of good money management skills. While many people have a stable income, learning how to manage money wisely can be difficult. Poor money management practices can cause participants to run out of money when they have a sufficient income to cover their expenses or add to low income problems and debt.

### Message to Group Participants:

“A budget is a plan for spending and saving money. Budgets will help you consider your regular expenses like how much you need for housing, transportation, and food. This information will help you make careful career choices to meet your future economic needs. Knowing your financial needs can also help you learn what salary you need to stay on a job. In addition, by living within a budget, you will be able to enjoy your income as opposed to feeling “strapped” or “broke”. You may also learn that your income plays a major role in maintaining the job that you have, as well as planning to upgrade to a better job.”

### Session Objectives:

- Learn the benefits of managing money.
- Learn ways money is often “thrown away”.
- Examine current spending habits.
- Learn how to prioritize expenses.
- Learn how to pay off debt.
- Create a budget.

### Materials:

Handout 1 Why Budget?  
Handout 2 Spending Facts  
Handout 3 Where Does the Money Go?  
Handout 4 Personal Budget  
Handout 5 Worksheet Method

### Employment Counselor’s Session Introduction:

“I want you to think about a story someone once told me. This person told me about how he viewed money when he was on the streets dealing. He liked the fact that he could afford to buy things for his mother who had raised him on her own, for his children so they could have a better life than he did growing up, and for his girlfriend so everyone could tell by looking at her clothes and her jewelry that someone was taking care of her—

and that she was taken. He liked the idea that having money could provide THINGS to his family, POWER on the street, and RESPECT from people who only knew of him. However, these things came at a cost. He had to FEAR the police, WORRY that if caught, his assets would be seized, and FIGHT, which could result in his mother not having a son, his children not having a father, and a girlfriend who just lost her man.”

“We can see that money was important to this person but what were the personal *needs* he had. How did money falsely meet these needs?”

“Budgeting is a very important part of life. Whether we realize it or not, stress, leisure, attitude, health, and even illegal activity can all be affected by the way we manage our budgets. Having a well-planned budget can prevent the worry that is spent trying to find the money to pay bills at the end of the month. Budgeting can also remove the temptation that may exist to engage in illegal activities to make a quick buck. In this session, we will discuss why a budget is important and how to create a budget that will help you manage your money.”

There are several specific reasons why it is beneficial to keep a budget. Distribute and discuss Handout 1: “Why Budget?” to review these reasons.

### **Developing a Budget**

“The most effective way to manage your money and control spending is to create a budget. A budget is created by listing all the expenses you have in a month, along with your income. There are two types of expenses you have to consider, fixed expenses and variable expenses. Fixed expenses do not change from month to month and include bills such as your rent, mortgage, or insurance payments. Variable expenses change each month, such as your utility bills or the money you spend on food. The obvious goal is to have more money than you pay out in expenses each month. A budget allows you to decide how much of your income you are setting aside for each expense, so you can see what areas you might want to cut back on so you have more money for necessities. You can also set aside money for things you enjoy, such as going to movies, shopping, or going out to eat. Include these things in your budget but think of ways to save money such as going to matinee movies, shopping on sale days, or only going out to eat a few times a month.”

Distribute Handout 4: “Personal Budget” and walk participants through the process of creating a budget. Have participants write down their current spending habits and then make adjustments to these habits by creating an ideal budget. Emphasize the importance of having money deposited into their savings account from each paycheck.

### **Where Does the Money Go?**

Let’s think of some other ways that habits can lead to wasteful spending.

1. **I'd like to begin the session today by asking who has a soft drink with them.** As participants raise their hands, ask one of them: “\_\_\_, where did you buy that soft drink?” \_\_\_ answer. “And how much did you pay for that?” \_\_\_ answer. “Could you have gotten it cheaper anywhere else? If so, how much?” \_\_\_ answer. Depending on the amount given in the answer to the final question, proceed with #2.
2. Ask participants, “**Would you give me \$\_\_\_?**” Notice I said **GIVE, not LEND. How about giving me \$\_\_\_ per day? Why shouldn't you give me \$\_\_\_ a day--you spend that much for cigarettes, --why not me? What would you do if the person sitting next to you put his hand in your pocket and took \$\_\_\_** (The usual response is a violent one.) **Does that make you mad? Chances are that your anger does not reflect the importance of the money, but rather your dislike of being taken advantage of.**

“The purpose of these questions is to get you thinking about money and how you manage it. All the little things we spend money on adds up over time. Often, we waste a good amount of money on things that “only cost a few bucks”. Some people waste money while other people handle it wisely and end up with extra. For example, it is much cheaper to take your lunch everyday than buy your lunch at a fast food restaurant or gas station. You can also save money by brewing a pot of coffee in the morning and taking it with you rather than stopping to buy a cup. It doesn't seem like much money, but over time it adds up substantially. Let's take a look at some spending facts, just to see how quickly spending a little bit of money can add up.”

Distribute Handout 2: “Spending Facts” to discuss how small purchases add up over time. Then distribute Handout 3: “Where Does the Money Go?” to discuss specific areas where people tend to overspend without realizing it.

### **Prioritizing Necessities**

“Prioritizing your spending is a lot like prioritizing your time; you decide what expenses are most important and balance that with the amount of money you make. You decide which expenses are the most important by looking at the consequences of not paying them. The expenses that carry the largest negative consequence if they aren't paid are priority expenses. For example, if you do not pay your rent, you will eventually lose your apartment or house. If you do not budget money for groceries, your family will not eat. Expenses such as shelter, food, basic clothing, and utilities are usually priorities. Expenses which are priorities are paid first.”

“The money which is left over after paying your priority expenses can be further divided into lower priority bills, savings, and play money. The lower priority bills are those which are not as important as food and shelter, but also carry large consequences if not paid. Examples of these are car payments, credit card bills, or phone bills. After these bills are paid, an amount of money should be saved for future emergencies. If you still

have money after these expenses, then you can use the “play money” to do things you enjoy, such as going out to eat, getting a cell phone, or shopping.”

## **Keeping Track of Spending**

Note: Address the additional money management issues if the group does not seem overwhelmed with the amount of information already presented.

“It’s very easy to lose track of where your money is going even after you develop a budget. The easiest way to keep track of spending is by writing everything down that you spend. By using your budget, there are two simple ways to keep track of your spending and not spend more money than you budgeted.”

1. Envelope Method
2. Worksheet Method

### *Envelope Method*

“The envelope method is a great way to manage your money, especially if you have problems spending more than you intend. To use the envelope method, you create a separate envelope for each budgeted monthly expense. Then you place in the envelope the amount of cash that you have budgeted for that expense. For example, you may have an envelope labeled “rent” with \$500, an envelope labeled “food” with \$200, and an envelope labeled “clothing” with \$60.”

“When you need money to pay an expense, you take it out of these envelopes. Once the envelope is empty, then you can’t spend any more money on that expense. At the end of the month, you replenish the envelopes and begin again.”

### *Worksheet Method*

“The worksheet method is much like the envelope method, except that you write your budget and expenses on a worksheet and keep a running total of what you spend. You begin with a column for each expense. At the top of the column, you label it with an expense, and write how much you have budgeted for that expense. Then, each time you spend money, you subtract it from your budget. Once your worksheet column has reached zero, then you can no longer spend money on that expense.”

Distribute Handout 5: “Worksheet Method” and help participants develop a running tally of expenses. Work through an example using a blank worksheet.

(Source: Ramsey, & Ramsey, 1997)

## **Paying Down Debt**

“The average person has several credit cards and is several thousand dollars in debt. It is not unusual for us to owe several different companies a good chunk of money. You may



have a house payment, car payments, and credit card payment that you pay each month. When you add up all the money you owe, it can seem very overwhelming.”

“There are three strategies that people use when faced with a large amount of debt:”

1. They either stop making payments because they feel like they will never get it paid off anyway.
2. They make the minimum payments to keep companies happy.
3. They plan extra money in their budget to make a larger payment than required.

“The first option will ruin your credit so that you won’t be able to get loans in the future. With the second option, you are never actually paying off your debt. You are only paying off the interest. However, the last option will help you get out of debt the quickest. Not getting overwhelmed by your debt and making a commitment to send extra money will be your quickest way to get your finances back in control.”

(Source: Ramsey, & Ramsey, 1997)

### **Keeping Your Money in a Safe Place**

Note: This section should only be used if you believe the participants are not familiar with opening a bank account. Before sharing the information with the group, find out if participants need this information. It may be helpful to just share information on the benefits of a bank account, rather than the logistics of obtaining one. Participants may be suspicious of banks and may benefit from this information.

“With all the money you’ll be saving with your new budget, you’ll need a safe place to keep it. Although a sock drawer at home may seem like a good place to keep money, should a fire or theft occur, you’d be left without your savings. However, depositing your money into a bank account protects your money from unfortunate events such as fire and theft.”

“There are two basic types of bank accounts: a savings account and a checking account. Having either account entitles you to cash your check for free instead of paying a fee at a local grocery store. The savings account is used to save money. This account will also pay you interest on the money kept into the account. The more money you have in savings, the more money the bank will pay you for letting them save it for you. A checking account allows you to keep track of your spending, much like the worksheet method. You can also use checks to pay your bills instead of having to buy and fill out money orders.”

“Setting up a checking account is relatively simple and often free. Most banks charge no fee for opening an account, and only charge for a book of checks. To open an account, you will need a photo ID card, such as a driver’s license, and a social security card. This allows the bank to verify your identity and keep you safe from threats of identity theft.

Once you have the required ID, you should visit your local bank and tell them you wish to open up an account. They will then have you fill out paperwork that ensures you agree to manage the account. You will then be able to cash your checks for free, use checks to pay your bills, and deposit money for future use.”

(Source: Ramsey, & Ramsey, 1997)

### **Closing Comments**

Managing money is very important. Creating a budget is a great way to track how much is spent versus how much money is made so participants can work to cut spending and save money. Participants can also ease the burden of debt by prioritizing expenses and budgeting money more efficiently. Often, when people create a budget, they find they wish they had more money to spend on things they enjoy. Fortunately, the solution may be in each person’s hands. If participants are unhappy with their current salary, a better understanding of their finances may motivate them to improve their skills and look for a better job.

**Session 8 Handout 1**  
**WHY BUDGET?**

**7 things a budget can do for you...**

1. ***Know what is going on.*** Personal budgeting allows you to know exactly how much money you have--even down to the penny.
2. ***Control.*** A budget is the key to taking charge of your money. You can control your money, instead of having your money limit what you do.
3. ***Organization.*** A budget divides money into areas of spending such as spending, savings, bills, food, and other costs (fines, restitution).
4. ***Communication.*** A budget can help stretch resources stretch because everyone is able to have input in how money should be spent and exactly how much is available.
5. ***Opportunities.*** A budget allows you to take advantage of opportunities that you may not realize you could afford. With a budget, you will never have to wonder again--you will know.
6. ***Less Stress.*** You will know that your bills and necessary expenses will be paid. Preparing for financial priorities will enable you to relax at the end of the month.
7. ***More Money.*** Unnecessary expenditures can be eliminated. Savings, no matter how small, can accumulate and made to work for you.

**Session 8 Handout 2**  
**SPENDING FACTS**

If you spend this much per day	It equals to this per week	Monthly total	Yearly Total
.25	\$1.75	\$7.58	\$90.96
.50	\$3.50	\$15.17	\$182.04
.75	\$5.25	\$22.75	\$273.00
\$1.00	\$7.00	\$30.33	\$363.96
\$1.25	\$8.75	\$37.92	\$455.04
\$1.50	\$10.50	\$43.50	\$522.00
\$1.75	\$12.25	\$53.08	\$636.96
\$2.00	\$14.00	\$60.67	\$728.04
\$2.50	\$17.50	\$75.83	\$909.96
\$3.00	\$21.00	\$91.00	\$1092.00
\$4.00	\$28.00	\$121.33	\$1455.96
\$5.00	\$35.00	\$151.67	\$1820.00
\$6.00	\$42.00	\$168.00	\$2016.00
\$7.00	\$49.00	\$196.00	\$2352.00

### HOW CAN “OTHER EXPENSES” ADD UP?

*Think about money given to kids, cabs, cable, electronic equipment, etc.*

<i>Bought DVD player</i>	<b>300.00</b>
<i>Bought new television that will work with new DVD player</i>	<b>400.00</b>
<i>Kids want to go skating</i>	<b>20.00</b>
<i>Kids want new shoes</i>	<b>120.00</b>

**Session 8 Handout 3**  
**WHERE DOES MONEY GO?**

*Determine how you spend the most money.* Trimming a few dollars from the following areas will make a difference in your savings. Usual categories to decrease include groceries, entertainment, eating out, and clothing.

*“Track” a few categories closely.* How much do you spend on renting movies? What do you spend on cigarettes, candy bars, and fast food? The answers may shock you ...

*Keep track of cash.* If cash “sifts” through your fingers, keep a slip of paper and a pencil stub in your wallet to record each time you spend any money (dollars or coins) for a week. Spending cash is an easy way to “blow your budget”.

*Review your habits.* Do you take several trips a day in your car just to drive around? Do you really watch all the cable channels or could you save money by watching regular TV? Are call-waiting and caller ID really necessary on your telephone? Would recycling cans and bottles earn money while saving the environment?

*Make sacrifices.* If you want your budget to work and allow you to save money as well as having enough money to meet your daily expenses, you must make some sacrifices. Allow yourself enough money in your budget to do the things you need to do (and some of the things you want to do), but limit unnecessary spending.

**Session 8 Handout 4  
PERSONAL BUDGET**

**ESTIMATE YOUR INCOME:**

Income Sources	Weekly	Twice A Month	Monthly	Other
Wages (Take Home)				
Child Support				
Unemployment Insurance				
AFDC				
Pension/Retirement				
Social Security				
Interest/Dividends				
Alimony				
Other				
Total				

**INCOME AND EXPENSES:**

**Current**

**Ideal Budget**

	Current	Ideal Budget
<b>Income (total):</b>		
<b>Expenses:</b>		
Rent/Mortgage		
Life/Disability Insurance		
Medical/Health Insurance		
Car Insurance		
Household Insurance		
Car/Transportation Costs		
Other Loan Payments		
Savings		
Other:		
Other:		
<b>Flexible Expenses:</b>		
Utilities (heat, water, phone)		
Credit card payments		
Auto upkeep/transportation		
Food costs		
Clothing		
Household Supplies		
Bus/Cab/Public Transportation		
Medical/Dental		
Recreation/Entertainment		
Church donation/charities		
Child care		
Education		
Personal Allowances		
Other:		
Total Expenses:		
<b>Total Income-Expenses</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>

(Source: [www.personal-budget-planning-saving-money.com/worksheets.html](http://www.personal-budget-planning-saving-money.com/worksheets.html))



## **SESSION 9: Thinking Errors**

### **Session 9 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

**Recognizing Thinking Errors**

**Identifying Thinking Errors**

**Correcting Thinking Errors**

**Closing Comments**

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 9 Handout 1 THINKING ERRORS EVALUATION

Session 9 Handout 2 THINKING ERRORS

Session 9 Handout 3 WAYS TO CORRECT THINKING ERRORS

Session 9 Handout 4 BLANK THOUGHT MAP



## **SESSION 9 THINKING ERRORS**

### Message to the Employment Counselor:

Many drug users have irresponsible behavior patterns. These patterns can relate to poor job performance and unstable or almost nonexistent work history. In order to improve a participant's chances of successfully finding and maintaining employment, the type of thinking that has contributed to this irresponsible pattern should be identified and addressed. This type of thinking has been called "criminal thinking" and has characteristics that can be recognized and targeted in constructive ways. In fact, "criminal thinking" or thinking errors are not unlike what the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous refers to as "alcoholic thinking," or what Narcotics Anonymous refers to as "addictive thinking," or "stinking thinking".

Drug users are faced with learning to identify different types of thinking errors, which come from criminal thinking, which might interfere with their recovery. Thinking errors can be viewed as a trigger, and participants should be given tools to help recognize this type of thinking. Recognition and acknowledgement of thinking errors is required to transform criminal thinking into more realistic and productive thought processes in work settings.

### Message to Group Participants:

"You may find the language used throughout this session to be a little different than you might use to describe your own thinking and behavior. This session is not to make you feel stereotyped as "criminal," but to address issues of thinking errors in the "real world," which are related to decisions you make or behaviors you engage in."

"Many people in recovery from drug and alcohol problems engage in irresponsible behavior. At one time or another, many in recovery blame their problems on other people, places or things, rather than taking responsibility for their actions and acknowledging their behavior as the reason for their own situation. An important part of recovery is recognizing and acknowledging that behavior is largely a product of thinking, and that by changing thinking, a person can change their behavior. Thus, thinking errors can lead to criminal behavior. What many in recovery have learned is that the thinking errors that seemed to serve them well in the past, actually held them back, especially when working to keep a job or get a better one. In this session, you will find better ways to think and act, which will put you in a better position to manage your life in a way you are happy with and so that you can be productive in your job."

### Skills:

- Identify thinking errors.
- Acknowledge the importance of identifying and correcting thinking errors.
- Learn a more effective way of thinking.

## Materials:

Handout 1	Thinking Errors Evaluation
Handout 2	Thinking Errors
Handout 3	Ways to Correct Thinking Errors
Handout 4	Blank Thought Map

## Employment Counselor's Session Introduction:

“Before we begin a discussion about thinking errors, let’s make sure everyone understands what we mean when we say “thinking errors”. Thinking errors are when your expectations and thoughts about situations or people, if acted on, will have a negative result for you and/or those around you. Thinking errors are how we describe thinking that has, in the past, led many drug users to problems or crisis situations. One thing to keep in mind is that things that happen in daily life are not random, but a consequence for some action. Where you are today is the direct result of choices you made in the past. Every choice you have made has been based on what you determined you needed to do at the time to survive. However, since you have learned ineffective ways of handling problems, it is possible to re-teach yourself new ways of thinking. By learning to recognize and change thinking errors within your own thought processes, you will begin to increase your chances of successfully finding and maintaining employment. Continuing thinking errors prevents many people from fully recovering from drug and alcohol problems, and decreases the chances of meaningful employment. Without a full recovery from addiction, a productive and meaningful lifestyle is difficult to achieve. Changing thinking errors can help you improve your employment during your recovery.”

## **Recognizing Thinking Errors**

“I would like everyone to think about a time when you felt completely powerless or when the consequences you experienced for an action seemed to come from nowhere. The powerlessness you were feeling at the time may have been the result of mismanaging your life. Generally we find that mismanaging one area of life will spill over into other areas until life seems to be a complete crisis.”

“Thinking errors create poor judgment that generally causes bad choices and result in a mismanaged life. Often, thinking errors blind you so that you don’t see that you’re thinking in certain ways. Thinking errors make it seem like you have no alternatives. Also, these thinking errors allow you to justify your actions, no matter what the real reasons are behind those actions. These thinking errors are closely related to defense mechanisms, which include thoughts such as “there is no problem,” “this is really no big deal,” and “it’s ok if I do this because...,” when really, there may be a very big problem at hand that seems evident to everyone but you! So, instead of getting offended, understand that you may have never had the opportunity to learn the skills of thinking more effectively. Then realize that it takes dedication and self-respect to change these ways of thinking.”

“A first step is noticing when you use thinking errors. This can be a painful experience because it requires accepting responsibility and looking at feelings which you may not want to examine. Over time, a person who accepts responsibility and practices not using thinking errors is able to learn from his or her mistakes and to be more comfortable living a drug-free and crime-free life.”

“The good news is that by taking a closer look at situations that have occurred in the past and using the Thought Map technique, you can begin to get a clearer picture of how situations could have been better handled. You can then apply a plan for correcting thinking errors in your life.”

Distribute Handout 1: “Thinking Errors Evaluation” and have participants complete the questions to evaluate their use of thinking errors. Have participants total their score, then present the following scoring index. Discuss whether participants believe they have been correctly evaluated.

Thinking errors index:

- 0-9 Mostly Non-thinking Errors
- 10-19 Somewhat Non-thinking Errors
- 20-29 Moderate Thinking Errors
- 30-40 Extreme Thinking Errors

### **Identifying Thinking Errors**

“If you have a high thinking errors score, you likely commit one or more thinking errors. These errors include thoughts about yourself and other people. Often, it is these thinking errors that cause you to make choices about your behavior.”

Distribute and discuss Handout 2: “Thinking Errors.” Ask participants to discuss whether they have had similar thoughts to those listed. Ask participants how these thinking errors could cause problems for them.

### **Correcting Thinking Errors**

“Fortunately, thinking error habits that have been learned, can be replaced with more effective strategies. These strategies help combat the thinking errors that most of us commit by giving up alternative ways to think.”

Distribute Handout 3: “Ways to Correct Thinking Errors” to help participants develop more effective thinking.

Read the following stories. Discuss the types of errors these individuals are making. Use the following questions to guide discussion:

1. “How difficult will it be for each person to recognize that he or she is committing a thinking error?”

2. "How difficult would it be for a person to correct thinking errors?"
3. "How does each participant think committing the thinking errors in each example would make him or her feel about him/herself?"
4. "How does each participant think he or she would feel after substituting the replacement thinking for each thinking error?"
5. "How much practice does each participant think it will take to be able to recognize their own thinking errors?"

*Carla*

"Carla would like to go to technical school to become a cosmetologist. She just returned to her schooling and is trying to see if Vocational Rehabilitation will pay for her training. Eight months ago, Carla was told that before any training would be supported, she would have to show that she could hold a steady job for a minimum of six months. Carla believed that since she worked most days during this time she should be allowed to attend a training program. Her work history during this time began with a job as a receptionist in a Beauty Shop for four months before quitting to work with a friend at a restaurant. She quit working at the restaurant after three weeks because her friend got fired for stealing from the register, and she was listed as a suspect. Because Carla knew she had nothing to do with it, she became angry and told her employer "where to go". Knowing she had to maintain employment, Carla went to a temporary agency where she continued to work temporary jobs until she found something she liked. When nothing came along, she decided to give the Vocational Counselor a call to say she was ready to go to school because it had been six months."

*Jimmy*

"Jimmy worked at a construction site where a very expensive piece of equipment turned up missing. Jimmy's boss suspected him because of his criminal past. Jimmy was told he was on "thin ice". Jimmy did not do anything but felt that he would be charged with stealing and that all of his hard work had been for nothing. He is considering not coming back to work and skipping town."

*Ruth*

"Ruth worked as a receptionist in a busy office. Betty, a co-worker with whom Ruth has had difficulty, discovered that \$60.00 missing from her purse. Ruth was worried because they had difficulties in the past, and she was afraid that Betty would think she took the money. Ruth stewed about this and was ready to tell Betty "where to go"."

## *Clarence*

“Clarence got a new job at a construction company. Monday morning after a long weekend, it was discovered that the company vehicle had 400 miles on it that had not been logged. There were three people who had access to car keys, and Clarence was one. He had been telling everyone about his weekend out of town and his co-workers knew that his car frequently had trouble. Clarence was thinking about quitting his job so he would not have to deal with the accusations that he believed were coming.”

Distribute Handout 4: “Blank Thought Map.” Have participants develop a thought map based on one of the previous stories. Encourage participants to think of alternative ways of thinking that might make the individuals’ lives more manageable.

## **Closing Comments**

“Even though it is easy to get offended and deny that you have thinking errors, this kind of denial only makes it more difficult for you in the long run. It’s equally as unproductive for you to feel worthless or beat yourself up for your past choices. It’s best to consider that different people are taught different skills and different ways of thinking. It’s possible that you haven’t had the opportunity to learn more effective ways to think about things. However, now that you have begun to practice effective thinking skills, you may also begin to notice that making more effective decisions and engaging in more positive behaviors becomes easier.”

**Session 9 Handout 1**  
**THINKING ERRORS EVALUATION**

By: Thomas Cleereman and David Foster

1. I think about making positive changes in my life.

- 4 None or almost none of the time
- 3 A little of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 1 Good part of the time
- 0 Most or all of the time

2. I blame other people and situations for my problems.

- 0 None or almost none of the time
- 1 A little of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 3 Good part of the time
- 4 Most or all of the time

3. I feel remorse for the harm I have caused others.

- 4 None or almost none of the time
- 3 A little of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 1 Good part of the time
- 0 Most or all of the time

4. I avoid doing things that are boring or disagreeable.

- 0 None or almost none of the time
- 1 A little of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 3 Good part of the time
- 4 Most or all of the time

5. I am committed to doing responsible activities and fulfilling my obligations.

- 4 None or almost none of the time
- 3 A little of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 1 Good part of the time
- 0 Most or all of the time

6. I think about the consequences of my actions before I make decisions.

- 4 None or almost none of the time
- 3 A little of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 1 Good part of the time
- 0 Most or all of the time

7. I avoid dangerous situations.

- 4 None or almost none of the time
- 3 A little of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 1 Good part of the time
- 0 Most or all of the time

8. I need to have things my way.

- 0 None or almost none of the time
- 1 A little of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 3 Good part of the time
- 4 Most or all of the time

9. I think of myself as better than others.

- 0 None or almost none of the time
- 1 A little of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 3 Good part of the time
- 4 Most or all of the time

10. When I see something I want I take it.

- 0 None or almost none of the time
- 1 A little of the time
- 2 Some of the time
- 3 Good part of the time
- 4 Most or all of the time

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

**Session 9 Handout 2**  
**THINKING ERRORS**

1—ERROR OF CLOSED THINKING

- **Failure to notice the feelings or viewpoints of others.**
- **Failure to think about why I make poor decisions or the way I treat others.**
- **Noticing the faults of others and being quick to point them out.**
- **Failure to tell the whole truth about things.**

**EX: Feeling like all your problems at work are caused by a bad boss.**

2—ERROR OF VICTIMSTANCE

- **Not recognizing the help that has been given by others and not taking responsibility for the way life is.**
- **Blaming your neighborhood, others, or the past for the way life is.**

**EX: Excusing your behavior by saying “this was the way I was raised.”**

3—ERROR OF VIEWING SELF AS A PERSON WITHOUT FAULTS

- **Focusing only my personal good things.**
- **Failure to recognize behavior as destructive or negative.**

**EX: Reasoning that it doesn’t matter when you are late to work because you are a star employee while you are there.**

4—ERROR OF NOT TRYING HARD ENOUGH

- **Refusing to do things you find boring or unpleasant**
- **Saying “I can’t” when you are asked to do something.**

**EX: Refusing to stay late at work when asked, even though you have no evening plans and need the money.**

5—ERROR OF NO INTEREST IN RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR

- **Failure to get personal satisfaction or excitement from behaving responsibly.**
- **Unwillingness to cooperate unless the payoff or reward is immediate.**
- **Attitude that you don’t owe anyone anything.**

**EX: Simply not going to work because watching movies all day sounds better.**



## 6—ERROR OF NOT LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

- **Failure to use the past as a way to learn or prevent future mistakes.**
- **Making decision based on what you think is going on without looking into the whole situation.**

**EX: Continuing to hang out with an old friend who always manages to get you both in trouble.**

## 7—ERROR OF FEARING FEAR

- **Being unwilling to admit your fears, or hiding it with an overly optimistic attitude.**
- **Belief that others are disrespecting me when they talk to me about my negative behavior.**
- **Feeling worthless when others talk to me about my behavior or poor decisions.**
- **Quitting if it seems you might fail.**

**EX: Not applying for a better job because you think you won't get it.**

## 8—ERROR OF POWER THRUST

- **Feeling that you must be in control of every situation.**
- **Using manipulation or deception of other people to get what you want.**
- **Refusing to depend on someone unless you believe that person can be taken advantage of.**

**EX: Not listening to a supervisor at work because you know your way of doing things is better.**

## 9—ERROR OF UNIQUENESS

- **Thinking of yourself as better than others.**
- **Expecting others to act immediately if you need or want something.**

**EX: Feeling you shouldn't have to work holidays like everyone else because you have a family.**

## 10—ERROR OF OWNERSHIP ATTITUDE

- **Seeing people and things as objects to own or possess.**
- **Failure to consider the rights of others to be as important as my own.**
- **Using sex for power and control, not intimacy.**
- **Using others to make you look better.**

**EX: Only making friends with a co-worker because he'll take give you a ride to work.**

**Session 9 Handout 3**  
**WAYS TO CORRECT THINKING ERRORS**

**1. Don't keep secrets from others.** Let someone know what's going on in your life. This is the same for keeping secrets for others who are having troubles. If you are not helping yourself or others, you are hurting the situation. Letting others know what is going on in your life and encouraging others to do the same will help you and help others.

**2. Be responsible.** Remember that your situation is caused by the choices you make. Living responsibly and making good choices means that you will not have to worry about dealing with the consequences of poor decisions or getting caught. The benefits of responsible behavior are long-lasting.

**3. Respect yourself.** Realize that what is in the past cannot be changed and that you are in control of what happens to you in the future. Also, do not expect more from others than you expect of yourself.

**4. Work on your goals every day.** Start each day by thinking about what you need to do and think carefully before making decisions. The best days are those that are carefully considered. If you have to face a situation that you know has been risky in the past, come up with a coping plan—don't go just on instinct.

**5. Do a good job.** If you have promised someone you will do something it important to follow through. Pride comes from trying and succeeding, not half-doing something that you know will reflect on you as a worker.

**6. Live to prevent problems.** The more you think before making a decision, the better the outcome can be. If a situation, person, or thing has gotten you into trouble in the past, recognize that the result will likely be the same in the future. Learn from past mistakes to avoid making the same mistakes in the future.

**7. Ask for help.** Needing the help and support of others is nothing to be ashamed about. In fact, being able to ask for help and to give help to others is a sign that you are on the road to living life as a sober and productive individual. This is a sign that you are on the right track.

**8. Understand that there do not have to be winners and losers.** Life is not a competition. Remember this and only measure yourself against yourself. Are you doing better today than yesterday? Last week? One month ago? If you see someone who is doing well, ask them how they got where they are. Just because you don't know the problems others have does not mean their life is perfect so don't let jealousy keep you from focusing on you.

**9. Find things you have in common with others.** Relationships and partnerships are important. Taking time to do things you enjoy and trying new things will allow you to develop new relationships outside drug-using networks.

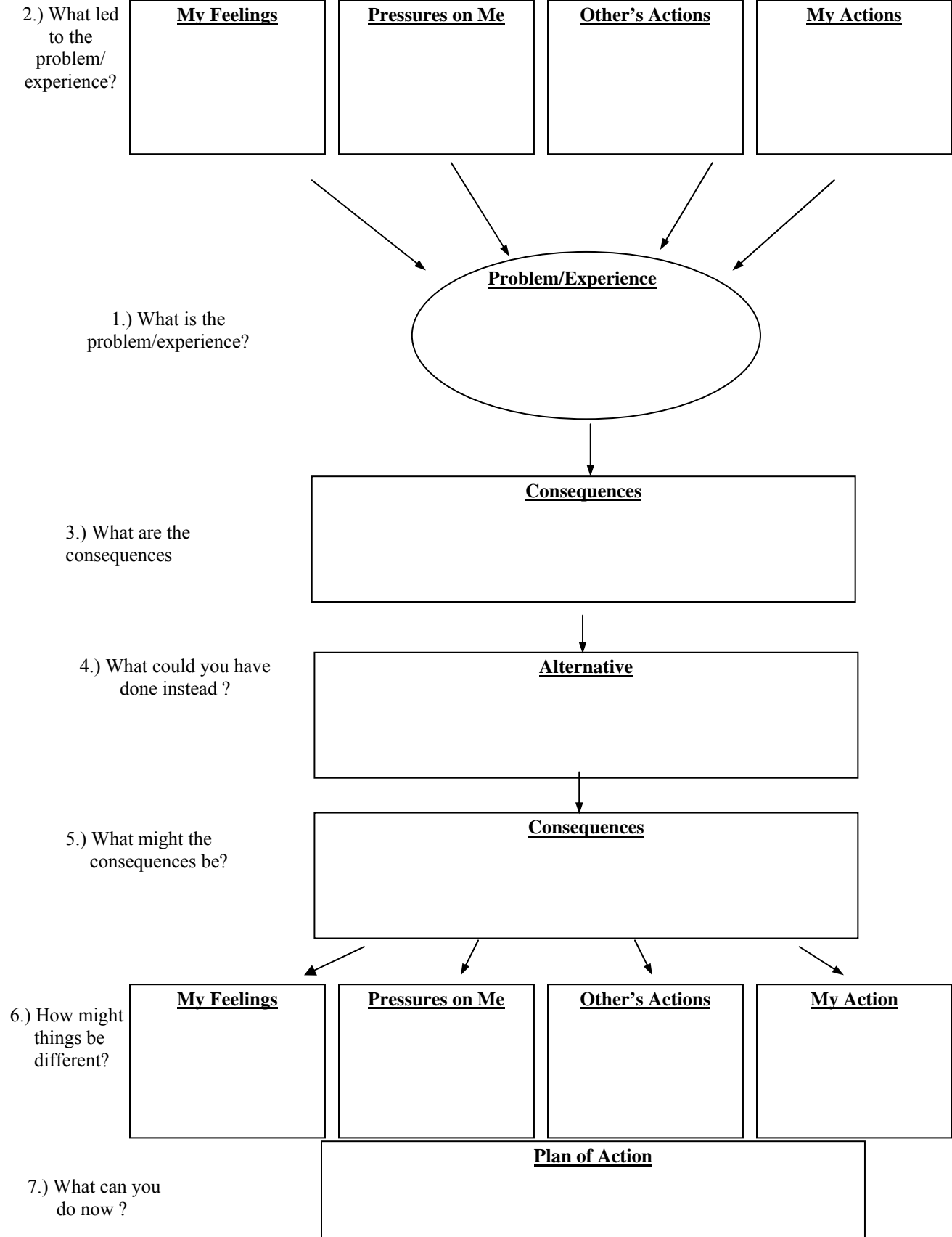
**10. The world does not owe you anything.** Although you have the right to your feelings about things that have not gone your way in the past, you do not have the right to expect special treatment, consideration, or compensation from the world. The best way to get what you want is to create a plan to get there and to not repeat mistakes that have prevented you from reaching goals in the past.

**11. Accept Responsibility for Past and Present Actions.** Admitting mistakes you have made can be very empowering. Remember, it is impossible to solve a problem if you don't know the problem. Giving attention to past mistakes, making amends, and preventing the same mistakes in the future will help you gain the self-respect you need to make recovery work.

**12. Set Principles and Goals for Life.** Knowing where you are going and where you don't want to be are very important for continuing to live a drug-free and crime-free life. This means choosing what you want out of life and being willing to do the right thing to earn what you want.

**13. Follow through with Commitments.** Make commitments and keep them. Start with small things and practice until this becomes a habit. A person's word is valued, and if that is not good, it is difficult to be successful at work or in personal relationships. Following through on your commitments will help people develop a healthy respect for you-which is important for your recovery.

**Session 9 Handout 4  
BLANK THOUGHT MAP**



## **SESSION 10: MANAGING ANGER & COPING WITH DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS AT WORK**

### **Session 10 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

The Difference Between "Reacting" and "Responding"

Starting to Know What "Ticks You Off"

Heading Off Trouble

Dealing with Difficult People

Pointing the Finger Back at You

Dealing with Problems at Work

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 10 Handout 1 TYPES OF ANGER

Session 10 Handout 2 IDENTIFYING DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS

Session 10 Handout 3 IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL PROBLEMS ON THE JOB

Session 10 Handout 4 NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE USES OF THE ABC APPROACH

Session 10 Handout 5 BLANK THOUGHT MAP

## SESSION 10 MANAGING ANGER & COPING WITH DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS AT WORK

### Message to the Employment Counselor:

Many participants have difficulty keeping a job because they can't cope well with workplace stress. Habits from the drug culture often surface when dealing with interpersonal issues on the job. What worked on the streets as a solution will not work in the workplace. However, learning workplace appropriate skills for dealing with difficult people and their "difficult behaviors" is a key to making the transition from a life of crime and drug use to a life of stability and work. This session should be presented as a workplace survival skill. For many, it may be tempting to quit work if interactions become difficult. Although this may be the case, it is important to help participants learn about work appropriate behavior and communication skills to make work better.

### Message to Group Participants:

"As you work on keeping your job or looking for a better job, you may run into difficult situations with co-workers or employers. Co-workers and bosses are bound to irritate you at some point. Using the strategies you used on the street to deal with difficult people, such as hitting someone or cursing at them, may not be appropriate for the workplace. Fortunately, there are better ways to handle these situations that allow you to keep both your pride and your job. We will discuss ways to handle difficult people, as well as learning how to control anger."

### Session Objectives:

- Learning ways to respond rather than react.
- Learning how to recognize anger.
- Learning how to deal with difficult co-workers and bosses.
- Discover that how you respond affects other people's behavior.
- Use the ABC method to deal with difficult work situations.

### Materials:

Handout 1 Types of Anger

Handout 2 Identifying Difficult Behaviors

Handout 3 Identifying Potential Problems on the Job

Handout 4 Negative And Positive Uses of the ABC Approach

Handout 5 Blank Thought Map

### Employment Counselor's Session Introduction:

"Choosing a *response* rather than *reacting* may be one of the most difficult things in recovery. In recovery there are many motivations to keep you on track, such as: to please others, to please yourself, to please your boss, to please your spouse, to support your

family, to pay restitution, to pay child support, and to feed yourself. Recovery provides many opportunities to improve your quality of life that were not possible with drug use. One opportunity is full time employment. However, with employment comes moody co-workers and difficult bosses. Becoming comfortable with trying work situations will require skills that are applicable to the world of work. Walking off the job when you get angry or when you do not feel like you are given the credit, is a reaction and not an effective survival skill at work.”

“Disagreements, frustrations, and poor choices occur in our lives because we are human. However, the thing that determines how well we handle difficult situations is ATTITUDE. Another way to look at this is *how you choose to react*. Regardless of how much you may want to control the behaviors of others, you cannot. The good news is we can control our own behavior and that people react to our behavior just as we react to their behavior. If we are always pleasant and do our work without complaining, even if the boss seems particularly rude or demanding, we are guiding the way our boss will interact with us in the future. Even when a discussion is heated and further discussion does not seem possible, your ability to maintain calm will help.”

### **Starting to Know What “Ticks You Off”**

“It is very likely that, at some point, a co-worker or boss will make you angry. Unfortunately, dealing with anger effectively may be difficult for people in recovery. When dealing with the stress associated with lifestyle changes, a person in recovery may become angry at trivial things—which can perpetuate a vicious cycle that destroys marriages, families, jobs, and personal lives. Chronic anger can be costly, both physically and emotionally. When you are already stressed and angry, every day irritations can get “blown out” of proportion. Also, stewing over mild frustrations and allowing anger to grow sustains tenseness, which can produce heart palpitations, stomach aches and headaches, and the risk of “losing it.” Dealing with difficult situations effectively to manage anger requires a new way of thinking and skills. It is helpful to identify triggers to angry outbursts, behaviors that are most often frustrating, and the positive and negative consequences of the selected response.”

“In order to remain calm, you can try several things. The first is to realize when you begin to get angry. The angrier you become, the more difficult it is to respond effectively. If you catch your anger early, you’ll have greater success dealing with difficult co-workers.”

Ask: “What does anger look like?”

Make a list on the board using participants’ suggestions and the following examples:

*Feelings:* Frustration, irritation, feeling wound up, or feeling on edge often come before anger, and can be handled before it builds up.

*Physical reactions:* Muscle tension, headaches, sweating, rapid breathing, jaw clenching, pounding heart, and/or sweating.

*Difficulty falling asleep:* May be due to angry thoughts and feelings not addressed.

*Feeling tired, helpless, or depressed.* May be due to not being able to sleep, or feeling angry when you can't change things.

Using the previous information about anger, discuss how anger can be constructive or destructive. Distribute and discuss Handout 1: "Types of Anger."

### **Heading Off Trouble**

"Before a full blown crisis occurs, you are more able to remain level headed and to develop solutions to problems. Usually, problems at work arise when you have conflicts with the people you work with or situations you are in. The same happens when you are faced with situations that frustrate you. The goal is to change the way you act toward these people and situations, but before that, you must identify where the problem relationships are.

Distribute Handout 2: "Identifying Difficult Relationships." Have participants diagram their relationships at work and then discuss the behaviors of co-workers that are the most difficult to handle, as well as how participants would like them to change.

### **Dealing with Difficult People**

"Some people are not nice. They are hard to please, rarely seem happy, and seem to get satisfaction from humiliating or degrading employees. This type of situation is emotional abuse. This type of demeaning, dehumanizing behavior is unacceptable. But you are not helping the situation if you respond by being nasty or passive."

"As someone in recovery, the last thing you need is working in a place in which you do not feel support. However, you need a job, so quitting on the spur of the moment is not a good solution. You also need your sobriety for the long-run, and you have worked so hard up to this point. It would be a shame to have to backtrack. Therefore, you may be faced with difficult decisions when working with other people. You may have to ask yourself-Are you going to react or are you going to respond to this situation?"

"Anybody can have a bad day. A boss who has *his* supervisors breathing down his neck may cause him or her to *react* to you in a negative way because of something that has nothing to do with you. If you ask a question, and you get an angry response like, "You should know this by now!" response, you can react by blaming someone else, or by yelling or even cursing at your boss. Then something that had nothing to do with you has become personal. You also can respond to the same situation by saying—whether you believe it or not, "You are right I have been here for a while, but I have forgotten how to do this part of the job. I will take notes if you can help me." By remaining calm, you can



explain your needs, and send the message that you prefer that your boss communicate with you in a calm and respectful manner. It is amazing how giving respect to someone will earn future respect.”

“People usually have problems dealing with difficult people because of:”

- Fear of getting hurt
- Fear of rejection
- Fear of failure
- Fear of financial insecurity
- Fear of hurting others feelings

“Sometimes these fears are very real, especially when dealing with a difficult boss. If you complain to your boss, he may change his perception of you as an employee. So, you must choose your battles and decide whether it is reasonable for you to be upset. For example, there are many ways that a situation may make you angry, frustrated, or feel similar emotions. However, what led up to this particular event should determine your reaction. For example, if you were doing your job halfway for the past several days and your boss asked you to redo that job, you probably were expecting it and shouldn’t be angry. It is important to consider whether your actions deserved the consequence it received, such as being asked to re-do a poorly done job.”

Ask the group for suggestions that can be used in a situation and how situations could be handled in the future. Is the employee ever truly in a position of powerlessness or powerfulness? Use the following story to discuss whether the boss is being unreasonable and if Timmy should confront the boss.

*Timmy*

“Timmy works in the laundry department of a hotel. The boss demands that he fold and press the sheets a certain way but seems to change his mind a lot about how he wants things done. Timmy goes home mad everyday because he never feels that he can do his job good enough for his boss.”

*The Difference Between “Reacting” and “Responding”*

“Anytime someone interacts with you either in a positive or negative way, you have the opportunity to react or respond to what the person is saying. If you are having a very bad day and a stranger on the street smiles at you, you may have the urge to tell them off or you may become angry at them for being happy. On that particular day you may dislike happy people. This would be a *reaction*; a reaction based on the way you were feeling at the time. You also could *respond* to the person by smiling.”

“Although remaining calm may be difficult, it can be very helpful. If you do react, you can help yourself to learn to respond by identifying *what* caused the feeling of frustration or anger and *if* that feeling is a reaction or a response. As you practice this process you may begin by reacting and then quickly switch to responding.”

“As we have discussed, a couple of problems you may encounter at work are dealing with difficult people and managing your anger well enough to respond rather than react. The

best way to respond to difficult situations is not to look for someone to blame, but to concentrate on solutions. Blame only prevents a problem from being solved and makes people feel angry and resentful.”

“You can’t change the behavior of others. Know that the solution must start with you whether or not you did anything wrong. So, when faced with a difficult situation or person, you should ask yourself what you did to contribute to the problem and how can you change your behavior to prevent further problems. Keep in mind that people often react to you the way you respond to them. If you change your response, it will in turn change theirs.”

Share the following story with participants to illustrate this point:

“John would come to group and talk about his co-worker Betty not doing her part of the work. After several weeks of talking about this and becoming more frustrated, the focus became more about not liking Betty and less about work. At this point, it was easy to “get caught up in” how much Betty gossips and how lazy she was. Finally we decided to break the situation down step-by-step. What ended up being the problem was each person had a different opinion of how the job should be done. Trays were sitting out longer than John thought they should be so he was putting them away. Betty, who was really supposed to put them away, never put the trays away quick enough and eventually stopped putting them away at all. John was angry because he felt like Betty was giving him more work, because he was doing her job of putting away the trays and his regular work duties. Betty started talking about “the angry man with the felony conviction”. Did the Betty gossip? Yes. Was she someone he would want to become close friends with? Not likely. However, we came up with a plan to change John’s behavior, which, in turn, changed how Betty reacted to him. First, John thanked her for helping him “last week” and told her he could not have made it through that hard day without her. Then, John nicely asked if Betty would mind helping him put away the trays. Within a couple of days, this became part of her routine. Second, John began talking about positive things with her like good weather or what television shows were on. Without even mentioning how much the gossip bothered him, John was able to decrease the amount of workplace gossip. Best of all, he was able to show everyone that he was a nice guy which they couldn’t tell before.”

Distribute Handout 3: “Identifying Potential Problems on the Job” and discuss situations which are especially frustrating to participants. Begin to introduce how participants react to these situations will influence how others behave in return.”

### **Dealing with Problems at Work**

“To deal with problems at work by changing your behavior, you must first determine the cause of the problem. To look at the original problem, your behavior, and the resulting consequence, it is helpful to use the ABC approach.”

A = Antecedent (What was the cause)

B = Behavior (What you do in response)  
C = Consequence (What happens as a result)

“The B is your chance to respond to some situation (A) that is causing a problem. When you change the response, you change the consequences (C). So, you can choose to act constructively or deconstructively in response to a difficult situation.”

Present Ray’s story and distribute Handout 4: “Negative and Positive Uses of the ABC approach.” Discuss how Ray chose to respond constructively or deconstructively.

*Ray*

“Ray has been working as a plumber for six months. His job requires him to keep his own schedule and to respond to customer calls. Ray did very well for the first four months when his supervisor was keeping a close eye on him. However, since Ray has shown his ability to be responsible, his supervision decreased. For the past two weeks, Ray has been taking long breaks and showing up late for house calls without any reason. Ray lied to his employer about how long jobs take and about the type of problems he found. Ray pocketed \$200 in one week by telling customers that the problem was worse than it really is and offering to fix “extra” problems for cheaper than his employer would charge. By doing this, he is telling customers they are getting a deal when he is actually taking advantage of them and his employer. Having extra money in his pocket makes Ray feel that he does not need to work so he has not gone to several scheduled house calls. Do you think Ray’s lack of responsibility cost his employer business and is threatening his job? How do you think Ray’s employer will handle this?”

Distribute Handout 5: “Blank Thought Map” and explain to participants that completing a thought map is like using the ABC method. Both methods allow you to look at behaviors and consequences to behaviors. Have participants think of a difficult situation they are currently experiencing at work. Then, using the thought map, think through how their behavior may be affecting this problem at work.

### **Closing Comments**

When bosses and co-workers do frustrating things, you can become very irritated. Irritation can easily build into anger. This results in less control over how you respond, causing you to react in a deconstructive way which you might later regret. However, if you are aware that you are getting angry and can anticipate difficult situations, you can respond more constructively. Doing this means behaving in a way that will allow you to vent your frustrations without losing your job, even in very frustrating situations. So, instead of feeling angry, resentful, and lashing out, you will feel in control and capable of dealing with even the most difficult people. This will help you advance your career and improve your “people skills.”

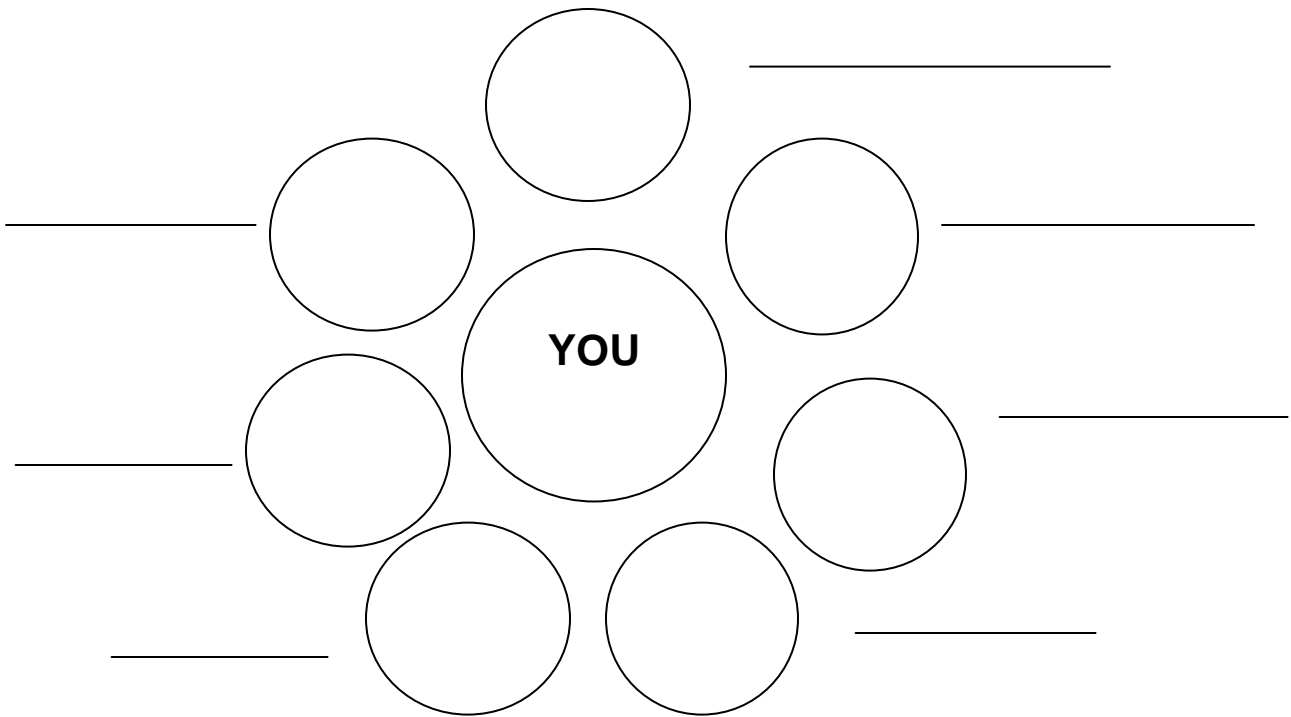
**Session 10 Handout 1**  
**TYPES OF ANGER**

Remember, it is possible to be angry, but still respond constructively! If the angry person behaves in an irrational, aggressive manner, then it is likely that others will “punish” or “withdraw” from the angry person. Things can get even worse!

DESTRUCTIVE ANGER LEADS TO:	CONSTRUCTIVE ANGER LEADS TO:
Impulsive action and regret	Awareness there is a problem and taking positive action.
Poor decision-making	Motivation to make positive changes.
Poor communication with others	Increase in personal power.
Masking your true feelings	Communicating negative feelings.
Creating distance between you and others	Improvement in or ending destructive relationships.
Triggering anger or hostility in others	Fewer misunderstandings and strengthened relationships.

**Session 10 Handout 2**  
**IDENTIFYING DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS**

Directions: In the circles below, write the initials of people you work with daily. Next, draw a zig-zagged line from the center circle to each person with whom you have frequent conflict. Draw a wavy line to each person that you have a relationship that is sometimes good and sometimes bad. Finally, draw a straight line to the people who are very supportive and helpful to you. On the lines beside each circle, write the behavior or situation that is commonly the source of conflict.



<p>The behavior(s) I find difficult to handle is (are): _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>I would like the behaviors to change by: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
--

**Session 10 Handout 3**  
**IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL PROBLEMS ON THE JOB**

One key part of success is to continue to use and develop problem-solving skills. In the past, if you had a problem on the job you may have worked out the problem because you needed the job. However, this can change.

Take time to list several behaviors or situations you find difficult to deal with. Remember, the goal is to keep your job and move up to a better one. Success requires good problem-solving and communication skills.

One situation that often causes frustration for me at work is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One thing I can do to change the way I react to this situation is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One thing I can do to feel better about this situation is to: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One situation that often causes frustration for me at work is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One thing I can do to change the way I react to this situation is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One thing I can do to feel better about this situation is to: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One situation that often causes frustration for me at work is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

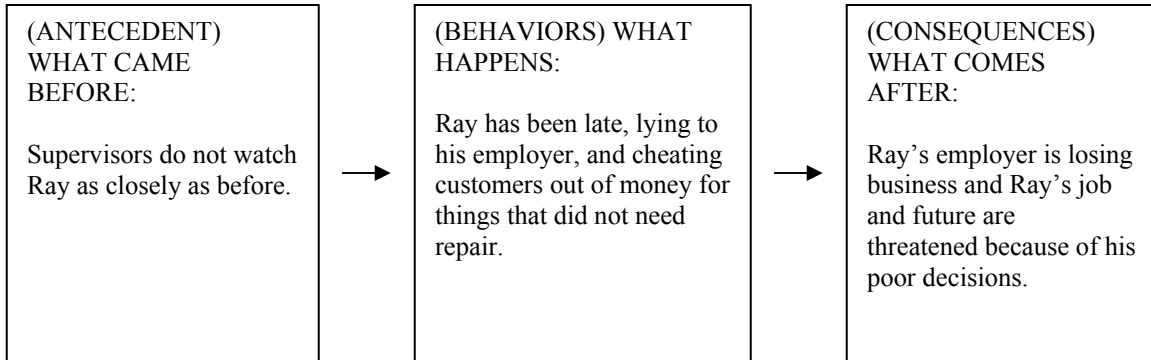
One thing I can do to change the way I react to this situation is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One thing I can do to feel better about this situation is to: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

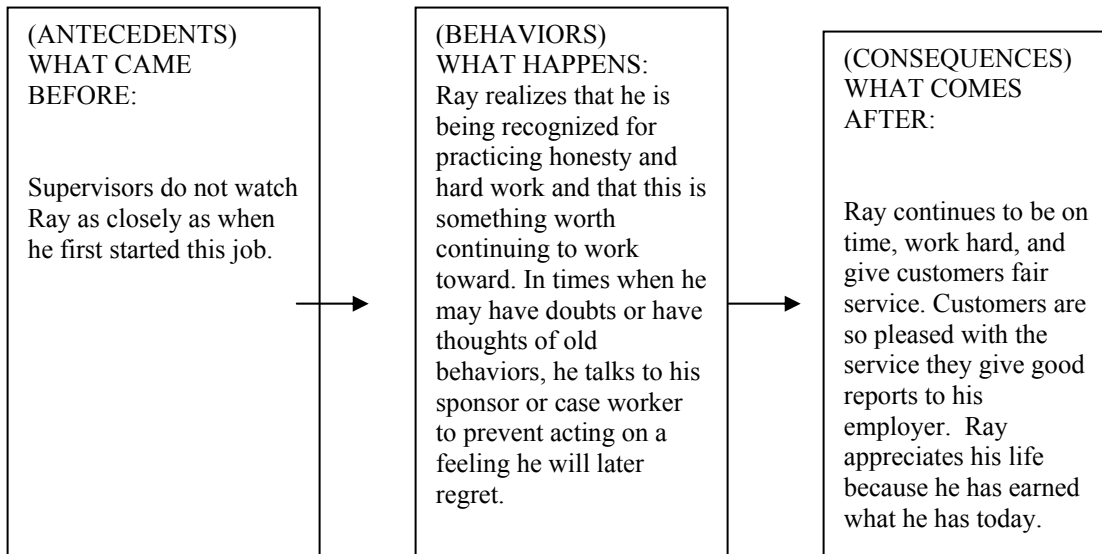
**Session 10 Handout 4**  
**NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE USES OF THE ABC APPROACH**

REFER BACK TO RAY'S STORY...

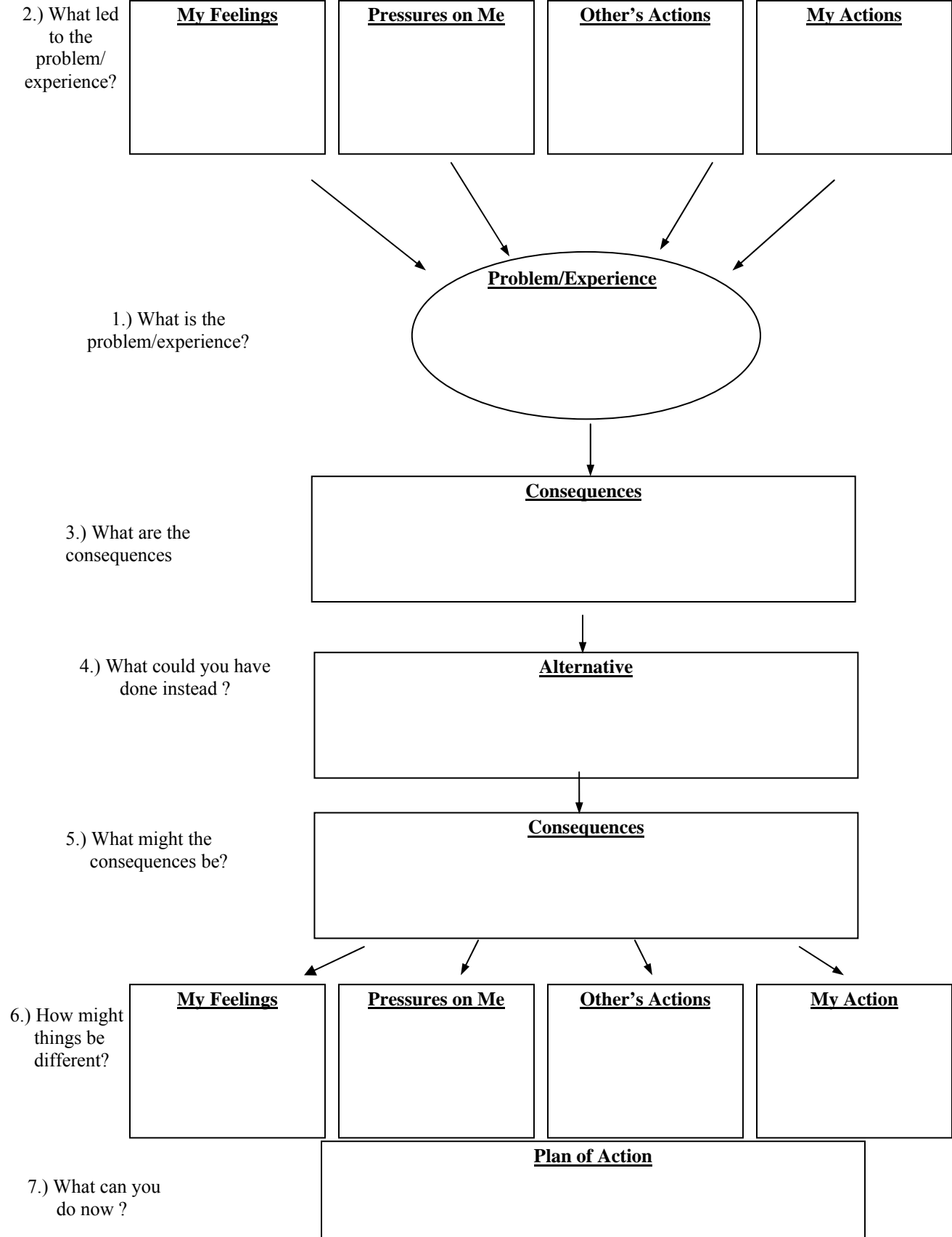
**Here is an example of how ABC works in a destructive way ☹️:**



**Here is an example of how ABC works in a constructive way 😊:**



**Session 10 Handout 5  
BLANK THOUGHT MAP**





## **SESSION 11: Sexually Appropriate Behavior at Work**

### **Session 11 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

**What is Sexual Harassment?**

**Why Do I Need To Be Aware of Sexual Harassment?**

**How Do I Recognize Sexual Harassment?**

**What do I do if I am Sexually Harassed?**

**Tips to Avoid Sexually Harassing Others**

**Appropriate Relationships at Work**

**Spotting Sexual Harassment**

**Closing Comments**

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 11 Handout 1 SEXUAL HARASSMENT: TRUE OR FALSE

Session 11 Handout 2 ANSWERS TO HANDOUT 1 SEXUAL HARASSMENT QUIZ

## **SESSION 11**

### **SEXUALLY APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR AT WORK**

#### Message to Employment Counselor:

Sexual harassment and sexually inappropriate behavior in the workplace are important issues for participants. For some, sexual harassment can be an uncomfortable subject. Some participants may also believe that laws against sexual harassment are excessive and will argue that “people can’t take a joke anymore.” This misunderstanding may place participants in a situation where they may be unknowingly committing sexual harassment or making someone uncomfortable.

Since many participants may not have continuously been in the work force, they may not be aware of appropriate sexual behavior at work. If participants are not familiar with the sexual harassment laws, they may find themselves in an uncomfortable or hostile situation and feel this is appropriate behavior. Understanding sexually appropriate behavior may also help participants evaluate whether it is a good idea to engage in a workplace romance.

#### Message to Participant:

“Most of us have different ideas about what is sexually appropriate at work and what is not. Some of us see no problem with dating people at work. Some of us may joke around with people at work without intending to make others uncomfortable. Thus, it is important to discuss how to make decisions about what is acceptable work behavior. For example, how do you know when joking about sexual issues is taken too far or who you can and can’t ask out for a date at work?”

#### Session Objectives:

- Understand the definition of sexual harassment.
- Learn to identify what constitutes sexual harassment.
- Learn what to do if you are sexually harassed.
- Learn how to avoid sexual harassment.
- Discuss the potential problems with dating at work.

#### Materials:

- Handout 1     Sexual Harassment: True or False  
Handout 2     Answers to Handout 1 Sexual Harassment Quiz

#### Employment Counselor’s Session Introduction:

“It is important to realize that all the hard work that goes into building a good work history and reputation can be easily lost by saying or doing something that makes another person feel uncomfortable. In this session we will discuss issues surrounding sexually appropriate behavior at work.”

## **What is Sexual Harassment?**

“Sexual harassment occurs when one worker intimidates, ridicules, and insults another worker. Sexual harassment is against the law under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. There are two types of sexual harassment: quid-pro-quo and hostile environment. (1) Quid-pro-quo is Latin for “this for that” and is basically a trade. This is when an employer or co-worker makes sex a prerequisite or requirement for getting something in the workplace. (2) Hostile environment harassment is a situation in which an employer or co-worker does or says things to make the victim feel uncomfortable because of his/her sex. Whether an environment is hostile or not can only be determined by looking at the environmental circumstances. This includes frequency of inappropriate conduct, severity, whether it is physically threatening, or if the conduct interferes with an employee’s work performance.”

(Source: [www.discriminationattorney.com](http://www.discriminationattorney.com))

Distribute and discuss Handout 1: Sexual Harassment True or False. Ask each question to elicit group responses. Refer to Handout 2: Answers to Handout 1 Sexual Harassment Quiz for correct answers. Then discuss the following key points.

## **Why Do I Need To Be Aware of Sexual Harassment?**

“It is important to be aware of sexual harassment because it creates an uncomfortable and sometimes hostile work environment for those who experience or witness it. When someone is sexually harassed, it makes it very difficult to complete work duties or even to remain at a job. Also, the person being harassed may feel coerced into doing things they do not want to do in order to keep a job or get a promotion. Sexual harassment shifts the balance of power so that the person who is harassing has all the power, while the person who is being harassed feels like they have none.”

(Source: [www.discriminationattorney.com](http://www.discriminationattorney.com))

## **How Do I Recognize Sexual Harassment?**

“Sometimes it may be difficult to recognize sexual harassment from “joking around.” When “joking around” becomes offensive to other people in the workplace, it is sexual harassment. Specific behaviors that are included in the definition of sexual harassment range from any unwelcome sexual advance, conduct from repeated offensive or belittling jokes, having pornography at the workplace, or sexual assault. Examples may include: an employer who requires employees to submit to sexual requests in order to keep his or her job, an employer who tells a woman she “needs to be kept in her place,” or an employee who makes derogatory remarks about either gender.”

“It is also important to note that sexual harassment can be done by an individual or group of people. Sexual harassment is also not only confined to a man harassing a woman. Generally, if the person’s behavior makes another person feel uncomfortable and is sexual in nature, it may be sexual harassment.”

(Source: [www.discriminationattorney.com](http://www.discriminationattorney.com))

### **What do I do if I am Sexually Harassed?**

“If someone behaves in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, the first step is to ask the person to stop. It is important to clearly state that you want the behavior to end. This is a crucial first step if you later decide to take formal action, such as talking to your supervisor. It is also important that you document each event as it occurs.”

“If the harassment does not stop, you may need to take the next step. This may include saving any offensive photos, cards, or notes you receive. This should be kept in addition to a running documentation of the offensive acts. If there are records about your work performance, you may also want to get copies of all paperwork prior to making your report just in case there is retaliation. Then, you may want to make a written request that the behaviors be stopped. If the harassment does not end, more forceful action may be necessary.”

“If your attempts to end sexual harassment at work are unsuccessful, you may consider filing an official complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). A complaint must be filed with the EEOC in order to file a private lawsuit against someone who has sexually harassed you.”

(Source: [www.discriminationattorney.com](http://www.discriminationattorney.com))

### **Tips to Avoid Sexually Harassing Others**

“For those who are unsure whether their own behaviors are or are not considered sexual harassment, it may be helpful to consider the following questions.”

- “Would you discuss, or do the behavior in front of your spouse or your parents?”
- “How would you feel if your mother/father, wife/husband, sister/brother or daughter/son were subjected to the same words or behavior?”
- “How would you feel if another man or woman did or said the same things to you?”
- “Does it need to be done or said at all?”

“It is likely that if you answer negatively to the above questions, you may be sexually harassing a co-worker. If you say something that you later think may be offensive to someone, ask them and make amends for having poor judgment.”

(Source: [Nolo.com](http://Nolo.com), 2001)

## Appropriate Relationships at Work

“Has anyone here ever dated someone with whom you worked? If you have, you’re part of the 80% of Americans who have engaged in a workplace romance. What this means is that two members of the same workplace are dating, married, having an extramarital affair, or otherwise romantically involved. Consider the implications of having a workplace romance. Daily on-the-job performance can be affected by arriving late to work, late lunches, less concentration on work and more on the romance itself, and having personal conversations behind closed doors. There are also potential career risks with a workplace romance which include: unhappy co-workers, increased work competition between romance participants, and conflicts of interest. Also, what if you break up? You are then forced to see each other at work everyday! This could create a very uncomfortable situation!”

“Sexual harassment can also result from workplace romance. This could occur if someone has been dating a supervisor or subordinate and the romance ended. The status difference, negative feelings from the break-up and mismatched motives can all be factors that may lead to sexual harassment. Also, even if the workplace romance is a “successful match,” workplace affection between partners may make co-workers feel uncomfortable. Therefore, it is essential that you weigh the pros and cons of an office romance before it begins.”

## Spotting Sexual Harassment

Discuss the following stories with the group one by one. In which of these stories sexual harassment has occurred?

1. Gina works in an office with mostly male co-workers. The men frequently tell sexual jokes and talk to each other about their sexual “conquests” in front of Gina. She said that they are making her uncomfortable with their stories. This has only intensified their behavior and they now have begun to include her in many of their jokes.

Yes, this is sexual harassment. Gina has already told her co-workers that their behavior is not appreciated and has asked them to stop.

2. Bill and Marsha work at a retail store. Marsha frequently asks Bill to massage her shoulders during work, makes sexual remarks to him, and pressures him to go have a bite to eat with the group after work. Bill is offended by her behavior, but he does not want to report her because he thinks people will make fun of him if he does.

Yes, sexual harassment is not only about women. Men can also be victims of sexual harassment. Once again, the behavior is unwelcome.

3. Todd never intends to offend or harass anyone, but often he puts his arm around some of the women in the factory and compliments them on their clothes or hair. Todd believes that he’s innocent, and he sees himself as just a friendly person.

Yes, this could be sexual harassment. Although Todd may not have intended to offend or harass anyone, if his behavior has this effect, it is harassment. In other words, the intent of the harasser is irrelevant.

4. Alan is a paramedic. For a couple of months now, Alan has been uneasy around his co-worker, Jeff. After their shift ends, the men shower together and Alan frequently sees Jeff staring at him. Jeff has even rubbed up against Alan and then acts as if it was an accident.

Yes, sexual harassment does not only apply to heterosexual behavior. Unwanted sexual conduct of any kind is illegal.

5. Denise is having a consensual sexual relationship with her supervisor. When things go wrong, she ends the relationship. Her supervisor continues to call her at home and pressures her to see him.

Yes, this could be sexual harassment. Although an individual may agree to a sexual relationship, the Supreme Court has ruled that the victim's willing participation in sexual relations is not the major issue. The focus of the case is on whether or not the supervisor's advances were unwelcome. It is usually assumed that sexual advances do not belong in the workplace and thus are unwelcome.

### **Closing Comments**

Unfortunately, many workers may not have a clear understanding of sexual harassment. Some workers may feel like they are just being friendly, but it may be they are actually offending their co-workers. Also, some employees may not realize the potential problems that may occur when dating co-workers. Whatever the case, in order to create and maintain a good working environment it is important to be aware of sexually appropriate behavior at work.

**Session 11 Handout 1**  
**SEXUAL HARASSMENT: TRUE OR FALSE?**

- T F Sexual harassment is a problem in the workplace.
- T F Men can be victims of sexual harassment.
- T F If a woman dresses or behaves in a sexy way, she is asking to be sexually harassed.
- T F Sexual harassment can occur between two people of the same sex.
- T F Saying “NO” is generally enough to stop sexual harassment.
- T F Women who work in jobs that are usually held by men are more likely to be sexually harassed.
- T F Most women enjoy getting sexual attention at work.
- T F Most men enjoy getting sexual attention at work.
- T F The only people who can harass women at work are those in positions of authority.
- T F Women use their sex appeal to get what they want.
- T F One of the best ways to deal with sexual harassment is to ignore it.
- T F Most victims of sexual harassment report it to their employer.
- T F Teasing and flirting are no problem and make work more fun.
- T F Workplaces should know if sexual harassment is occurring among their employees.

Adapted from (double cited) Strauss, Susan, & Esplanade, 1993) Sexual Harassment and Teens: A Program for Positive Change as printed in Healthy Relationships: A Violence-Prevention Curriculum.

**Session 11 Handout 2**  
**ANSWERS TO HANDOUT 1 SEXUAL HARASSMENT QUIZ**

**1. Sexual harassment is a problem in the workplace.**

*True.* Studies show that 75-90% of working women have experienced sexual harassment.

**2. Men can be victims of sexual harassment.**

*True.* About 15-30% of men say that they have been sexually harassed in the workplace. Men in nontraditional jobs may experience more sexual harassment than men in traditional jobs.

**3. If a woman dresses or behaves in a sexy way, she is asking to be sexually harassed.**

*False.* This is blaming the victim. Dressing or behaving in a sexually provocative way doesn't cause sexual harassment, although it may increase the likelihood that one will become a victim. On the other hand, NOT dressing or behaving in a sexually provocative way doesn't PREVENT harassment. The underlying problem is the way society teaches us to behave with each other.

**4. Sexual harassment can occur between people of the same sex.**

*True.* This is more common among males than among females. It is estimated that male-to-male sexual harassment, accounts for 20% of all male sexual harassment complaints; 3% are female to female. The law does not differentiate between the opposite-sex harassment and same-sex harassment; it applies to both kinds.

**5. Saying "NO" is generally enough to stop sexual harassment.**

*False.* Most sexual harassment is motivated by power. Therefore, a "no" may have no effect. Some teens report that saying "no" has actually increased the sexual harassment. Also, it is very difficult for a victim to say "no" to an employer, teacher, or even a co-worker.

**6. Women who work in jobs that are usually held by men are more likely to be sexually harassed.**

*True.* Women in nontraditional jobs tend to be victims of sexual harassment more often than women in traditional jobs. The reasons are unclear, but it is believed that power plays a role. In addition, in those environments, women are the minority.

**7. Most women enjoy getting sexual attention at work.**

*False.* Most women are angry, annoyed, and embarrassed by sexual attention at work. They report feeling belittled when their sexuality is noticed instead of their professional attributes and intelligence.



**8. Most men enjoy getting sexual attention at work.**

*True or False.* This is a tough one. Some groups of males report that they *do* enjoy it, while others report that they *do not* enjoy it. Men do not enjoy being sexually harassed. (Remember that harassment is unwanted sexual attention). However, many men indicate that they are flattered by some sexual attention. Their perceptions of what constitutes unwanted sexual attention may differ from women's perceptions.

**9. The only people who can harass women at work are those in positions of authority.**

*False.* Customers, coworkers, and friends can also be harassers.

**10. Women use their sex appeal to get what they want.**

*False.* The belief that women use their sex appeal inappropriately is largely a myth. Most women want to be recognized and rewarded for their work performance and professional expertise, not for being sexy.

**11. One of the best ways to deal with harassment is to ignore it.**

*False.* Sexual harassment escalates when it is ignored. Victims must take actions to stop the harassment. They must report it to the authorities.

**12. Most victims of sexual harassment report it to their employer.**

*False.* It is estimated that less than 5% of sexual harassment incidents in the workplace are reported.

**13. Teasing and flirting are no big deal. They make work more fun.**

*False.* Remember that sexual harassment is in the eye of the beholder. What may be teasing to one person may be sexual harassment to another.

**14. Workplaces should know if sexual harassment is occurring among employees.**

*True.* Companies are responsible for the safety and well-being of their employees and therefore should be made aware if this is compromised by the behavior of one or more employees.

## **SESSION 12: Recovery and Relapse Prevention**

### **Session 12 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

**Identifying Triggers**

**Dealing with Triggers**

**Identifying Relapse Warning Signs**

**Identifying Relapse in Others**

**Closing Comments**

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 12 Handout 1 RECOVERY CHECKLIST

Session 12 Handout 2 EXTERNAL TRIGGER QUESTIONNAIRE

Session 12 Handout 3 TRIGGER CHART

Session 12 Handout 4 TRIGGER—THOUGHT—CRAVING—USE

Session 12 Handout 5 THOUGHT-STOPPING TECHNIQUES

## SESSION 12 RECOVERY AND RELAPSE PREVENTION

### Message to Employment Counselor:

Coping with cravings, urges, and triggers can be difficult because sometimes there is no way to avoid people and places that can act as “triggers.” It is important to identify triggers early because drug use can greatly affect employment. For example, neighborhoods, living environments, families, work stress, and work environments can all be triggers that increase participants risk for relapse. It is also possible that drug use may be common in some work environments. Because triggers are everywhere, it can be difficult to avoid contact with people, places, and situations associated with drug use when it is part of work. Thus, relying on self-monitoring and encouraging personal independence can be important to establish a pattern of recognizing and coping with craving as well as encouraging work that is less likely to involve drug use.

### Message to Group Participants:

“During recovery, you will encounter places where you used drugs and people with whom you used drugs. The cravings to use may make it very difficult to stay clean. When you are unable to stay clean, there are consequences for employment. For example, you may stay out too late using and miss work the next day. Work may also become less important as using becomes the most important thing in your life again. As a result, you lose your employment, which is a great source of stability and money. Triggers can lead quickly to relapse, and to unemployment. Thus, an important part of recovery and relapse prevention is to identify what triggers these cravings and find ways to avoid these triggers. In this session, we discuss ways to recognize triggers, avoid triggers which increase risk, cope with relapse, and increase recovery.”

### Session Objectives:

- Talk about choosing situations that promote recovery.
- Learn to identify relapse signs.
- Learn to identify triggers and which triggers are stronger.
- Understand the chain of events between a trigger and use.
- Learn ways to break the chain of use.

### Materials:

Handout 1	External Trigger Questionnaire
Handout 2	Trigger Chart
Handout 3	Trigger—Thought—Craving—Use
Handout 4	Thought-Stopping Techniques
Handout 5	Recovery Checklist

## Employment Counselor’s Session Introduction:

“During this session we will talk about recovery and relapse prevention. The point of this session is not to debate the many different views of relapse and recovery, but rather to focus on identifying and coping with triggers which may increase relapse and jeopardize your employment. We would like to warn you that this session may be triggering.”

“Although there are many views about relapse and its role in recovery, few people discount the power that triggers and cravings can have on a person. In fact, most people agree that addiction is a cycle including the environment (the trigger), feeling a desire to use (the craving), and the act of using. Your entire life may have revolved around this cycle of addiction. During this period of addiction, all other things took a back seat to drug use. All of the things that you worked so hard to gain—employment, family support, non-using friends, and relationships—were lost in the haze that was created by the need to get high.”

“The opportunity to celebrate may be a trigger. Celebrations are times for planning and deliberate decision-making. Therefore, avoiding relapse can require developing a plan for times when you have thoughts or cravings about drug use.”

“Sometimes cravings cannot be avoided. Therefore, it is necessary to find ways to identify triggers ahead of time and learn to make alternative plans for dealing with them. It is important to teach yourself how to cope with relapse. In this session, we’ll explore the process of how cravings develop and then how to deal with feelings that place you at increases risk for relapse.”

## **Identifying Triggers**

“As we discussed before, all actions have consequences. This means that things don’t typically just happen “out of the blue”. So, when you begin to relapse, aside from engaging in a few recovery boosters, it will be helpful to determine the cause for your relapse. This will help you anticipate situations where it will be more difficult for you not to use.”

“Triggers are the people, places, objects, feelings, and times that cause drug cravings. Your addicted brain reacts to the triggers by “seeking” drugs. As a result of years of living the cycle of triggering and using, just one trigger can cause you to move toward alcohol or drug use. The trigger—thought—craving—use cycle feels overwhelming.”

“Let’s think of this example: If every Friday night someone cashes a paycheck, goes out with friends, and uses cocaine, what might the triggers be?”

### **Friday night/After work/Money/Friends who use/The bar or club**

“Notice how each level of trigger gets harder and harder to avoid. Also think about ways that you have invited triggers into your life.”

Distribute Handout 1: “External Trigger Questionnaire” and discuss some specific triggers. Then distribute Handout 2: “Trigger Chart” and have participants rate the strengths of their triggers. Explain to participants that those triggers with the strongest ratings will probably cause the most cravings.

### **Dealing with Triggers**

“Once you are placed in a triggering situation, you may begin to think about drinking or using. Triggers can even occur at work if your fellow workers are using or invite you out for a drink after work. Remember, triggers affect your brain and cause cravings even though you decided to stop your use of alcohol and drugs. Your intentions to stop must be supported by your decision to change behaviors that lead to drug use. If you do not identify and attempt to avoid your triggers, relapse may occur”

“Stopping this process is an important part of the recovery process. The easiest way to do this is:”

1. Identify triggers.
2. Prevent exposure to triggers (e.g., don’t work with large amounts of cash).
3. Deal with triggers in a different way (e.g., join a sports league or club that meets during specific times that are triggers).
4. Use a thought-stopping technique.

Distribute Handouts 3: “Trigger-Thought-Craving-Use” and Handout 4: “Thought-Stopping Techniques.” Discuss the “slippery slope” from trigger to use. Suggest that they have a choice over avoiding situations they rated as the most triggering. Discuss using thought stopping as a technique to break the chain of use.

### **Identifying Relapse Warning Signs**

“There are several warning signs may signal a relapse. Here are some signs of relapse to be aware of:”

#### **Internal Relapse Warning Signs:**

- Difficulty in thinking clearly
- Difficulty in managing feelings and emotions
- Difficulty in remembering things
- Difficulty in managing stress
- Daydreaming and wishful thinking
- Feeling hopeless
- Irritability

**Behavioral Warning Signs:**

- Irregular sleep or eating habits
- Loss of daily structure; routine becomes haphazard
- Irregular attendance at AA and treatment activities
- Episodes of anger, frustration, resentment
- Skipping work or not finishing duties at work.
- Lying, manipulation

“Knowing these signs will help you know when to take steps to avoid a full relapse episode. When you notice these signs, there are several things you can do to get back on the road to recovery.”

Distribute Handout 5: Recovery Checklist. Have participants decide which of these recovery boosters that they might consider when faced with warning signs of relapse.

**Identifying Relapse in Others**

The following structured stories can be used as a way to discuss and illustrate relapse issues. Have participants discuss the following issues:

1. What are the signs of relapse?
2. What are the triggers?
3. Which triggers are the strongest?
4. What should be done to avoid use?

*Bruce*

“Bruce is a construction worker who was introduced to alcohol while working his first construction job at the age of fifteen. Now, 20 years later, Bruce has developed his on-the-job skills, his salary level, as well as his drug use. It is not uncommon for Bruce to begin his day snorting a line with co-workers. This makes work go faster and makes Bruce feel that he does a better job. Bruce is struggling to avoid using on-the-job and has been successful so far. However, Bruce believes that he is not as fast on-the-job as when he was “using” with others. He also believes that he will probably use again if things are busy at work and he feels he can’t keep up.”

*Anna*

“Anna is a very smart and quiet woman in her mid-twenties. She looks like she wouldn’t have a problem. However, Anna is in recovery from addiction to pills and alcohol. She always managed to cover her use by attending college and maintaining a job. However, Anna’s life seemed to come crashing down the day she was caught taking pills at her daycare job. Suddenly, her dream of one day becoming a preschool teacher was gone and she had disappointed everyone who was close to her. One year later she had 10 months of sobriety, and has been thinking of a way to celebrate her one-year recovery.”

## **Closing Comments**

The risk for relapse can jeopardize employment. However, if participants can identify relapse signs, they can begin looking for triggers to avoid. When these triggers can't be avoided, such as triggers at work, they can use techniques to keep them on the track to recovery.

(Source: Margolis, Robert & Zweben, 1998)

**Session 12 Handout 1**  
**EXTERNAL TRIGGER QUESTIONNAIRE**

Place a check mark next to the activities or situations that may trigger your drug or alcohol use.  
Place a zero (0) next to activities or situations that are not triggers.

	Home alone		Driving		With particular people
	Home with friends		Before a date		After payday
	Friend's home		During a date		Before going out to dinner
	Parties		Before sexual activities		Before breakfast
	Sporting events		During sexual activities		At lunch break
	Movies		After sexual activities		While at dinner
	Bars or clubs		Before work		After work
	Beach/lake/nature		When carrying money		After seeing a street
	Concerts		After going past dealer's home		School/Work

2. List any other settings or activities when you have frequently used drugs or alcohol.

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3. List activities during which you would not use alcohol or drugs.

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4. List people you could be with and not drink or use drugs.

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5. Enter your triggers on the chart that follows.

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## Session 12 Handout 2 TRIGGER CHART

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: List triggering people, places, objects, or situations in the columns below with the strongest triggers in the far right column. Put “safe” people, places, and things in the far left column and milder triggers in between.

0%			100%
Chance of using			Chance of using
----- ----- ----- -----			
Never Use	Almost never use	Almost always use	Always use
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

These are “safe” situations.	These are low-risk but caution is needed.	These situations are high risk. Staying in these is extremely dangerous.	Involvement in these situations is deciding to stay addicted. Avoid totally.
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### STAYING SOBER IS A CHOICE.

Margolis, Robert D., Zweben, J. (1998) Treating Patients with Alcohol and Other Drug Problems: An Integrated Approach. Capital City Press, Montpelier, VT.(p. 325).

**Session 12 Handout 3**  
**TRIGGER—THOUGHT—CRAVING—USE**

**Relapse Justification: *The Losing Argument***

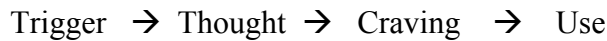
If you decide to stop drinking and or using, your thinking about alcohol or drugs gives your brain permission. Using and drinking starts an argument inside your head: your rational self versus the addiction. You feel as though you are in a fight and that you must come up with good reasons to not use. Your addiction is looking for a reason to get high. The argument “inside you” is part of a series of events leading to drug or alcohol use. How often in the past has your addiction lost this argument?

***Thoughts Lead to Cravings***

Cravings are not always easy to recognize. Often the thought of drinking or using passes through your head with little or no effect. To identify and stop this thinking takes effort. However, allowing yourself to continue thinking about drug or alcohol use is choosing to begin a relapse. The further the thoughts are allowed to go, the more likely you are to relapse.

***The “Automatic” Process: When it’s “on” it’s “on”***

During addiction, triggers, thoughts, cravings, and use all seem to run together. However, the usual sequence goes like this:



***Thought-Stopping***

The key to success in dealing with this process is to stop it before it gets started. Stopping the thought prevents it from building into a craving. It is important to do it as soon as you recognize the thoughts occurring.

**How can you stop some of the triggers found in Handout 1?**

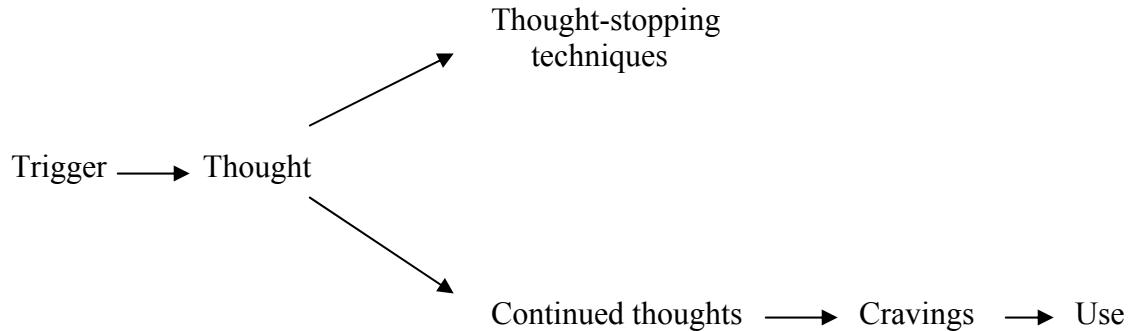
Plan: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Margolis, Robert D., Zweben, J. (1998) Treating Patients with Alcohol and Other Drug Problems: An Integrated Approach. Capital City Press, Montpelier, VT.(p. 322).

**Session 12 Handout 4**  
**THOUGHT-STOPPING TECHNIQUES**

**Changing the Process**

To get recovery started, it is necessary to change the trigger-use sequence. Thought-stopping provides a tool to “break” the process. The choice is:



**You can make this choice. It is not automatic.**

Some techniques that can stop these thoughts are listed below. You should choose and use those that work best for you.

*Visualization:* Picture a switch in your mind. Imagine flipping the switch to turn off the drug and alcohol thoughts. You may have to change what you are doing to make this switch.

*Snapping:* Wear a loose rubber band on your wrist. Each time you become aware of drug or alcohol thoughts, snap the band while choosing to think of a new subject that is meaningful and interesting to you.

*Relaxation:* Feelings of hollowness, heaviness, or cramping in the stomach are cravings. These feelings can often be relieved by breathing in deeply and by slowly exhaling. Do this three times. You should be able to feel the tightness leaving your body. Repeat this whenever the feeling returns.

*Call someone:* Talk to another person who does not use. Allow this person to hear your thinking process. Have phone numbers of supportive, available people with you always so you can use them when you need them. Also keep backup numbers in case someone on your list is not available.

**ALLOWING THE THOUGHTS TO DEVELOP INTO CRAVINGS IS MAKING A CHOICE TO REMAIN AN ADDICT OR ALCOHOLIC**

**Session 12 Handout 5**  
**RECOVERY CHECKLIST**

Getting and staying drug-free requires motivation and commitment from you and those who love you. To get the most from treatment and to continue changes in your life, you must change many old habits and replace them with new behaviors.

Use the following checklist to note the things you are doing now or have done recently. Place a mark beside the ones you are focusing upon.

	Keep a daily schedule
	Had a complete physical
	Attend individual counseling
	Identified ways to stop cravings
	Threw away all drug paraphernalia
	Keep a daily journal
	Avoid alcohol users
	Avoid drug users
	Avoid bars and clubs
	Stop using alcohol
	Stop using all drugs
	Pay all bills and financial obligations promptly (rent, child support, restitution, jail rent)
	Identify "addict" behaviors
	Avoid the triggers you can clearly control (friends, streets, jobs, and other things)
	Attend educational classes on addiction and life management
	Attend early recovery and relapse prevention groups
	Attend 12-step meetings
	Get a sponsor
	Exercise on a daily basis
	Take an honest look at your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and share them with others.

Which of the above are the easiest for you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which of the above take the most effort for you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which have you not done yet? Why not \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Margolis, Robert D., Zweben, J. (1998) Treating Patients with Alcohol and Other Drug Problems: An Integrated Approach. Capital City Press, Montpelier, VT.(p. 320).

## **SESSION 13: PROBLEM SOLVING ON THE JOB**

### **Session 13 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

Employment Counselor's Session Introduction

Problem Solving Reminder

Problem Solving with a Thought Map

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 13 Handout 1 PROBLEM SOLVING REMINDER SHEET

Session 13 Handout 2 PROBLEM SOLVING PRACTICE EXERCISE

Session 13 Handout 3 CARL'S STORY THOUGHT MAP

Session 13 Handout 4 BLANK THOUGHT MAP

## **SESSION 13**

### **PROBLEM SOLVING ON THE JOB**

#### Message to the Employment Counselor:

Many former drug abusers have a history of poor problem-solving skills. Drug abusers can often be impulsive and easily frustrated, and may rarely think through the consequences of their actions. Therefore, a critical part of job readiness is learning practical problem solving skills. Problem solving is especially important because participants are likely to be struggling with many serious problems, which include little money, financial stress, illness, and/or limited access to transportation. These day-to-day problems can interfere with a person's ability to get to work on time or to get to work at all.

#### Message to Group Participants:

“Many drug users have developed poor problem solving habits and some may have never learned effective problem solving approaches. It takes time, attention, and practice to change the living patterns which may have been adopted over long periods. You will probably need help in learning or re-learning how to make good decisions and solve problems.”

“Many drug users procrastinate and avoid problem solving because their problems seem overwhelming. Others have the opposite problem—they act too quickly to deal with problems. Instead of dealing with problems as they surface, these individuals may rely on drug use as a primary way of coping with life's problems.”

“Drug users may also believe their problems are caused by someone else's behavior. Attributing responsibility for problems to someone else may lead to expecting others to solve these problems, instead of working to solve the problem themselves. Procrastinating, relying on continued substance use, or expecting others to solve problems usually causes more problems. Small problems can grow into bigger problems when a person does not use strategies to deal with the issues early. For instance, not paying a traffic ticket or not paying child support can result in warrants or arrests, which would not have happened if the person had paid attention to the issue earlier, and taken responsibility for a solution.”

“This session is designed to help you improve your problem solving skills. The goal is to make these skills almost automatic so that you can break down a problem and find good solutions so that you like the end result.”

#### Session Objectives:

- Learn to accept responsibility for problems and work to find solutions.
- Review problem solving skills.
- Practice problem solving with a thought map to personal problems.

## Materials:

Handout 1	Problem Solving Reminder Sheet
Handout 2	Problem Solving Practice Exercise
Handout 3	Carl's Thought Map
Handout 4	Blank Thought Map

## Employment Counselor's Session Introduction:

“Problems cannot be avoided—they are part of everyday life. They are often a result of how we interact with others. It may make us feel better to blame other people for our problems, but it doesn't get the problem solved. Solving a problem involves looking at a situation differently. The situation only becomes a problem when a solution does not seem clear. Problem identification is one of the most important parts of problem solving. If you don't know how to identify the problem, you are going to have a hard time correcting the situation. However, once you identify the problem, you are then able to consider possible solutions. The more effort you expend to consider possible solutions, the more likely you will choose a better solution.”

“Problem solving for people with a history of drug use may be more difficult because they may have never learned the skills of problem solving. Instead of taking a step by step approach or using a thought map, drug users often make decisions impulsively or delay making decisions. Acting impulsively, or without thinking, is not effective problem solving. Ignoring the problem is not effective either. Problems that are ignored lead to more problems.”

Ask participants to discuss a time when things were going smoothly. Then ask participants to discuss a time when things felt out of control.

### **Problem Solving Reminder**

“In previous sessions, we discussed the ABC method of problem solving. Using this method, we can see that actions lead to consequence. In order to choose an action that will produce a desired outcome, we need to practice effective problem solving skills.”

Distribute Handout 1: “Problem Solving Reminder Sheet” to review the steps to problem solving. Then use Handout 2: “Problem Solving Practice Exercise” and ask participants to work through a current problem.

### **Problem Solving with a Thought Map**

“To give us extra practice solving problems, we are going to use thought mapping. As you recall, this is a way of focusing our discussion so we can see how our own thoughts or actions lead up to a problem, and what happened after you tried to solve it. Mapping can be helpful when we are trying to understand what kinds of things affect our problems and what kinds of things we can do to help solve problems.”

Present Carl's structured story aloud. Try not to read the story but present it as an adventure. Distribute Handout 3: "Carl's Story Thought Map" and use the thought map to work through Carl's problem of hitting his wife. Then distribute Handout 4: Blank Thought Map" and have participants work through another problem in Carl's life or have them volunteer a problem to work through.

### *Carl's Story*

"I couldn't believe the time my wife had me thrown in jail. I had been out of work for a few weeks. The factory laid most of us off after we lost a strike. Like every other person who was laid off, I went looking for work and had no luck. When I got home one night, there was no supper, and no wife. About an hour later she came in, smelling of alcohol. Things hadn't been good between us before I got laid off, and it was a lot worse after. I yelled at her for being gone and asked where the hell she had been and who she'd been with. She laughed and told me where to go. I told her she was my wife, and she damn well better tell me. She said she didn't have to tell me anything since I was not much of a man anyhow, having to depend on a woman to pay the rent. I pushed her on the shoulder. She came at me and hit me so I busted her mouth. She started screaming and crying. She was really bleeding then. I left and went to a friend's place. Next thing I know, the cops were there, taking me to jail. My father heard about what happened and bailed me out. The next thing I know I started using again."

### **Closing Comments**

Life can feel overwhelming when things seem out of control. Using good problem solving skills allows participants to take back control over their lives. Using these skills, they are in a better position to identify problems and choose a good solution to problems. When participants don't use effective problem solving skills, they create the potential for other problems. The best way to avoid this is to confront and handle problems when they are small so they don't create bigger problems. Doing this will help participants feel that their life is more under controlled.

(Source: Adapted from Monti, et al., 1989; D'Zurilla & Goldfried, 1971).



**Session 13 Handout 1**  
**PROBLEM SOLVING REMINDER SHEET**

Problem solving includes the following steps:

1. **Recognize that a problem exists.** “Is there a problem?”  
We get clues from our bodies, our thoughts and feelings, our behavior, our reactions to other people, and the ways that other people react to us that there is a problem.
2. **Identify the problem.** “What is the problem?”  
Describe the problem as accurately as you can. Break it down into manageable parts.
3. **Think of several ways to solve the problem.** “What can I do?”  
Brainstorm to think of as many solutions as you can.

Try taking a different point of view to see where it takes you.  
Try to think of solutions that worked before for similar problems.  
Ask other people what worked for them in similar situations.

4. **Select the most promising approach.** “What will happen if...?”

Consider all the positive and negative aspects of each possible solution, and select the one likely to “solve the problem” with the least negative consequences.

5. **Look at how well the solution addressed the problem.** “How did it work?”  
After you have given it a fair try, ask yourself if it seems to be working out? If not, consider what you can do to improve the plan, or decide to give it up, or try another possible solution.

(Source: Adapted from Monti, et al., 1989; D’Zurilla & Goldfried, 1971).

**Session 13 Handout 2**  
**PROBLEM SOLVING PRACTICE EXERCISE**

**Directions:** Select a situation with which you expect to have “difficulty coping.” Describe the situation. Make a list of things that led up to the situation (antecedents). My feelings; Pressures on me; Other’s actions; and My actions. Look at possible solutions and select your favorite.

- Identify the situation:

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- What were your actions leading up to or before the situation?

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- What were your feelings leading up to or before the situation?

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- What pressures did you have on you?

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- What were the actions of other people that led to this situation?

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- What are some of the solutions to the situation?

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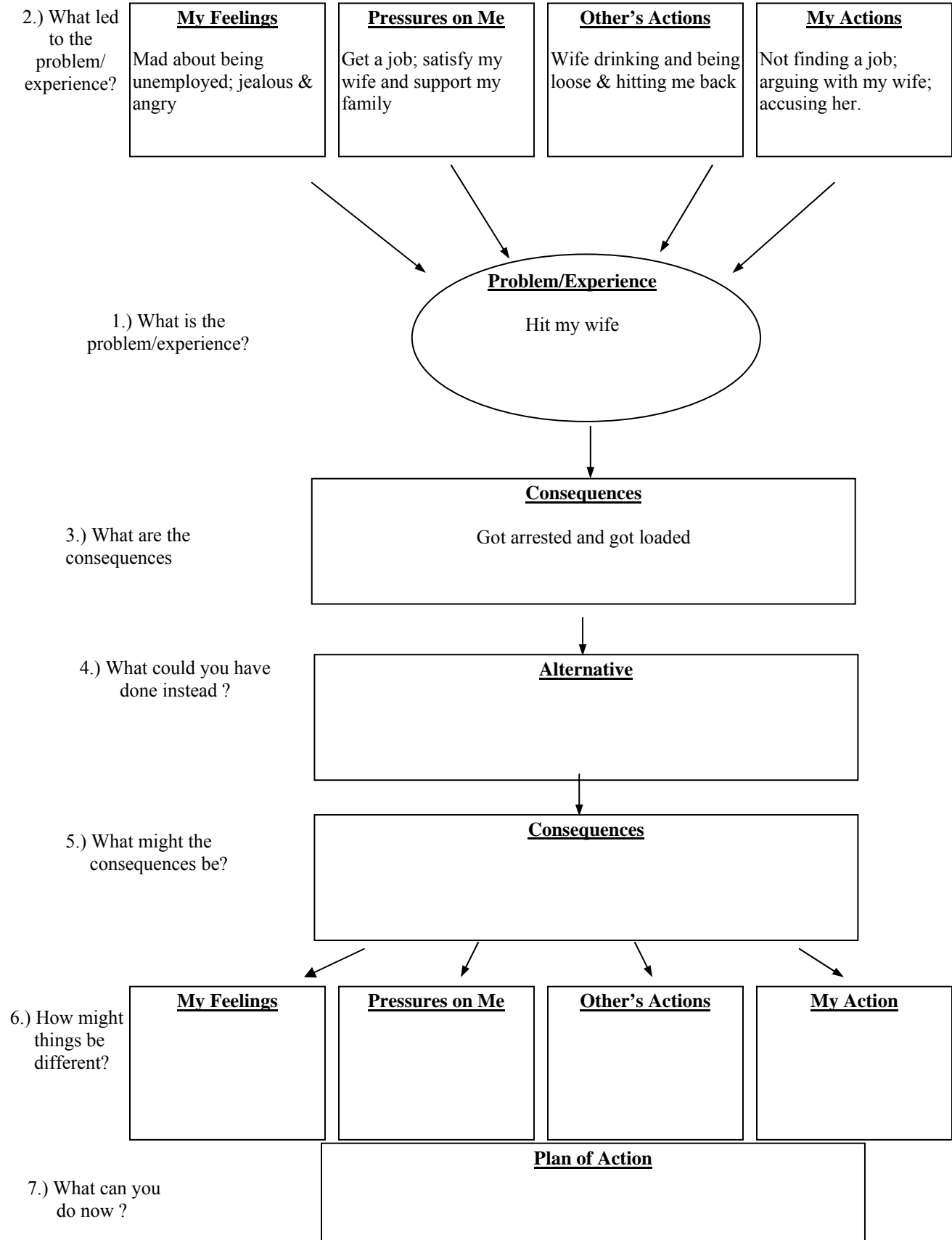
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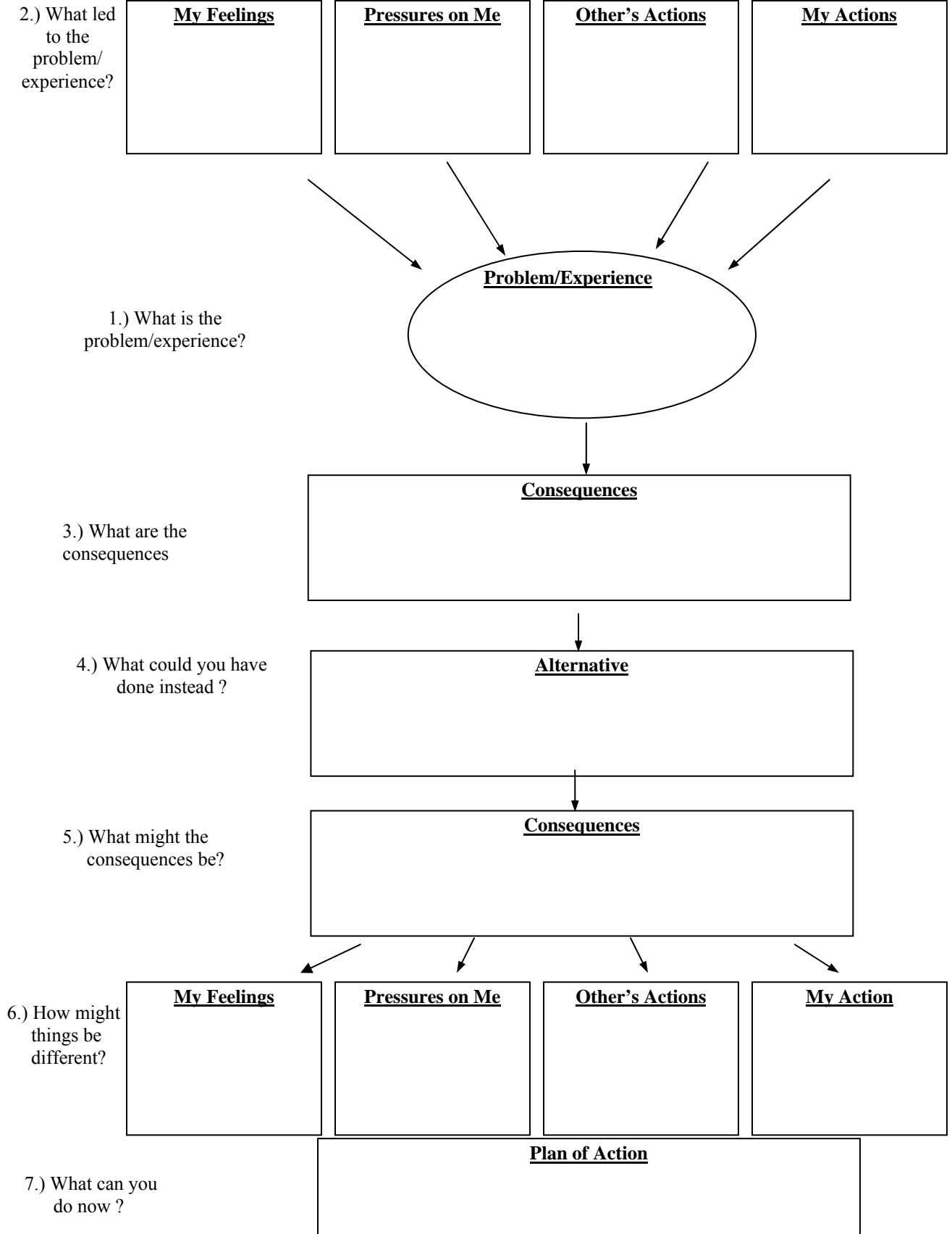
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(Source: Adapted from Monti, et al., 1989; D’Zurilla & Goldfried, 1971).

**Session 13 Handout 3**  
**CARL’S STORY THOUGHT MAP**



**Session 13 Handout 4  
BLANK THOUGHT MAP**



## **SESSION 14: IDENTIFYING FEARS AS A BARRIER TO GETTING A BETTER JOB**

### **Session 14 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

Identifying Fear

Overcoming Fear

Bolstering Motivation

Breaking Down Our Own Fears

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 14 Handout 1 ANALYZING AND INVENTORY DAILY FEARS

Session 14 Handout 2 OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

Session 14 Handout 2 EMPOWERING YOURSELF WITH QUESTIONS

Session 14 Handout 4 BLANK THOUGHT MAP

## **SESSION 14**

### **IDENTIFYING FEARS AS A BARRIER TO GETTING A BETTER JOB**

#### Message to Employment Counselor:

Fear is a powerful feeling that can interfere with a person's plan for moving on to a better job. This session is designed to help participants understand fear and to recognize how fear influences decision-making. Participants need to address fears by learning or re-learning effective skills as they move forward in their employment and recovery. It is also important to know how to identify issues and cope with them. Without the skills to deal with fear, participants may become complacent or feel inadequate which can increase the risk for relapse.

#### Message to Group Participants:

“At this point in the employment program, you may have experienced the financial and emotional stability of being employed. Having achieved success, you may be bored with your job, believe it is time to enter a new career, or look for a new challenge. The fear of failure is a common barrier which often prevents people in recovery from pursuing these types of employment goals. Fear is an intense and often overwhelming feeling. By accepting fear as a normal part of life and learning coping skills, fear can play an important role in reaching goals. During this session, we will discuss fear as a barrier that can keep you from pursuing and reaching job goals.”

#### Session Objectives:

- Identify specific fears.
- Learn to identify the signs of fear.
- Learn ways to overcome or decrease the fear of failure.
- Apply problem solving skills to change your response to fear.

#### Materials:

Handout 1	Analyzing and Taking Inventory of Daily Fears
Handout 2	Overcoming Barriers to Success
Handout 3	Empowering Yourself with Questions
Handout 4	Thought Map

#### Employment Counselor's Session Introduction:

“Each participant in this group has spent time and effort learning or strengthening skills to improve their employment. As your skills and strengths increase, you may want to consider looking for a better job. Now that you have begun to establish a positive work history with good references, you can begin looking for a job that is more challenging, has better benefits, or a higher salary.”

“However, there is one obstacle which stands in the way of many employees search for a better job-that obstacle is fear and/or, perhaps, failure. This is generally a fear of failure. For example, you may be afraid to apply for a new job out of fear that you may not get it, you may not be good at it, or you may not enjoy it.

## Identifying Fear

“There are several signs that suggest our behavior is being controlled by our fears. These signs include:”

- **PROCRASTINATION:** Putting off or avoiding the things you need to do.
- **INSECURITY:** Feeling insecure or telling yourself you can’t do a job well.
- **ISOLATION:** Not wanting to be around others and spending a lot of time alone.
- **ANGER:** Feeling angry at yourself or others or feeling disappointed.
- **PROJECTION:** Thinking things are other people’s fault and not your own.
- **WORRY:** Thinking the worst of every situation and not being able to enjoy the present moment for fear of what may happen later.

“The best way to get a handle on these fears is to identify them and confront them head on.”

Distribute Handout 1: “Analyzing and Taking Inventory of Daily Fears” and discuss how fears influence and often control our behavior.

## Overcoming Fear

“Fear can motivate each of us to make positive or negative decisions that can influence our lives. Fear becomes a problem when we procrastinate or delay in order to avoid a situation. Even though fear seems very intimidating and powerful, directly challenging that fear will weaken its control over you. It requires that you change the way you think about yourself and your capabilities. This process begins by staying motivated, pushing yourself to accomplish goals, and to believe you are worth all the effort it takes to change your life.”

Distribute Handout 2: “Overcoming Barriers to Success” and discuss the changes participants can make to challenge a demobilizing fear of failure.

## **Bolstering Motivation**

“Often it is difficult to stay motivated when trying to challenge your fears because it is uncomfortable. However, along the way you can ask yourself several questions to make you feel empowered, directed, and to give you a more optimistic perspective.”

Distribute Handout 3: “Empowering Yourself with Questions.” Discuss how participants can ask themselves these questions when they begin to feel that they aren’t skilled enough to get a better job.

## **Breaking Down Our Own Fears**

“It is often useful to use a problem solving approach to identify when fears are keeping us from achieving our goals.”

Distribute Handout 4: “Blank Thought Map” to each participant. Discuss the following story with participants. Ask participants to complete a thought map to examine how poor decisions are often the result of fear, especially fear of failure, and how they can be prevented.

### *Jason*

“Jason has worked for a temp agency for two years while trying to stay clean. When he initially applied for a job at the temp agency, he had few skills and a felony drug conviction. However, the agency was able to find him a job doing carpentry which provided on the job training. Now that Jason has been working at the temp agency, he has developed a wide variety of carpentry skills. In fact, his supervisor usually asks him to train new temp workers they hire. Jason’s supervisor and co-workers describe Jason as someone they can depend on and is enjoyable to work with. Jason doesn’t make a lot of money, but is able to pay his bills. He was recently called by a local general contractor to supervise the building of shelving for several new stores in the mall. The contractor tells Jason if he does this job well, the company will hire him and pay him much more than what he makes now. Jason turns down the job explaining he is happy where he is at, even though his skills are much more than his job requires.”

## **Closing Comments**

As participants are improving their skills and lengthening their recovery time, they should begin thinking about finding jobs that better match their skills. However, fears, like failing to obtain a better job may keep them from applying. By identifying these fears and creating a more optimistic view of themselves and their future, participants can further reap the benefits of upgrading employment and staying clean.



**Session 14 Handout 1**  
**ANALYZING AND INVENTORY DAILY FEARS**

What are my fears? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How has fear affected my goals? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What led to these fears? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How do I cope with these fears? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What have been the consequences of these fears? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What has fear taught me about myself? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Adapted from: The Counseling Center @ UMASS LOWELL)

**Session 14 Handout 2**  
**OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO SUCCESS**

- 1. VIEW CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY.**
  - Learn about yourself, others, and the world.
  - Overcome fears and obstacles.
  - Be creative.
  
- 2. IDENTIFY YOUR PASSIONS AND CHOOSE YOUR PATH ACCORDINGLY.**
  - Identify things that you feel strongly about.
  - Put emotional energy into your commitments.
  - Focus on what you want to achieve.
  - Learn from others who have achieved success in the areas you are pursuing.
  
- 3. ASSOCIATE WITH WINNERS.**
  - Identify people you admire and respect and place yourself in their company as often as possible.
  - Be mindful that people often are like the company they keep.
  - Place yourself on the path to success, whatever that is for you.
  - Find new life teachers.
  
- 4. ALL GOOD THINGS ARE THE RESULT OF HARD WORK AND CHALLENGE.**
  - Keep your focus and let obstacles motivate you to continue working.
  - Meet each challenge a little bit at a time.
  
- 5. STOP NEGATIVE THOUGHTS IN THEIR TRACKS.**
  - Ask yourself what you can learn from difficult situations.
  - Recognize progress you have already made.
  - Ask what you can do to change the specific aspect of your situation that is presenting as a barrier.

Holliday, Edwards. A. Maryland Leadership Group, Leadership Management Inc.

### Session 14 Handout 3

## EMPOWERING YOURSELF WITH QUESTIONS

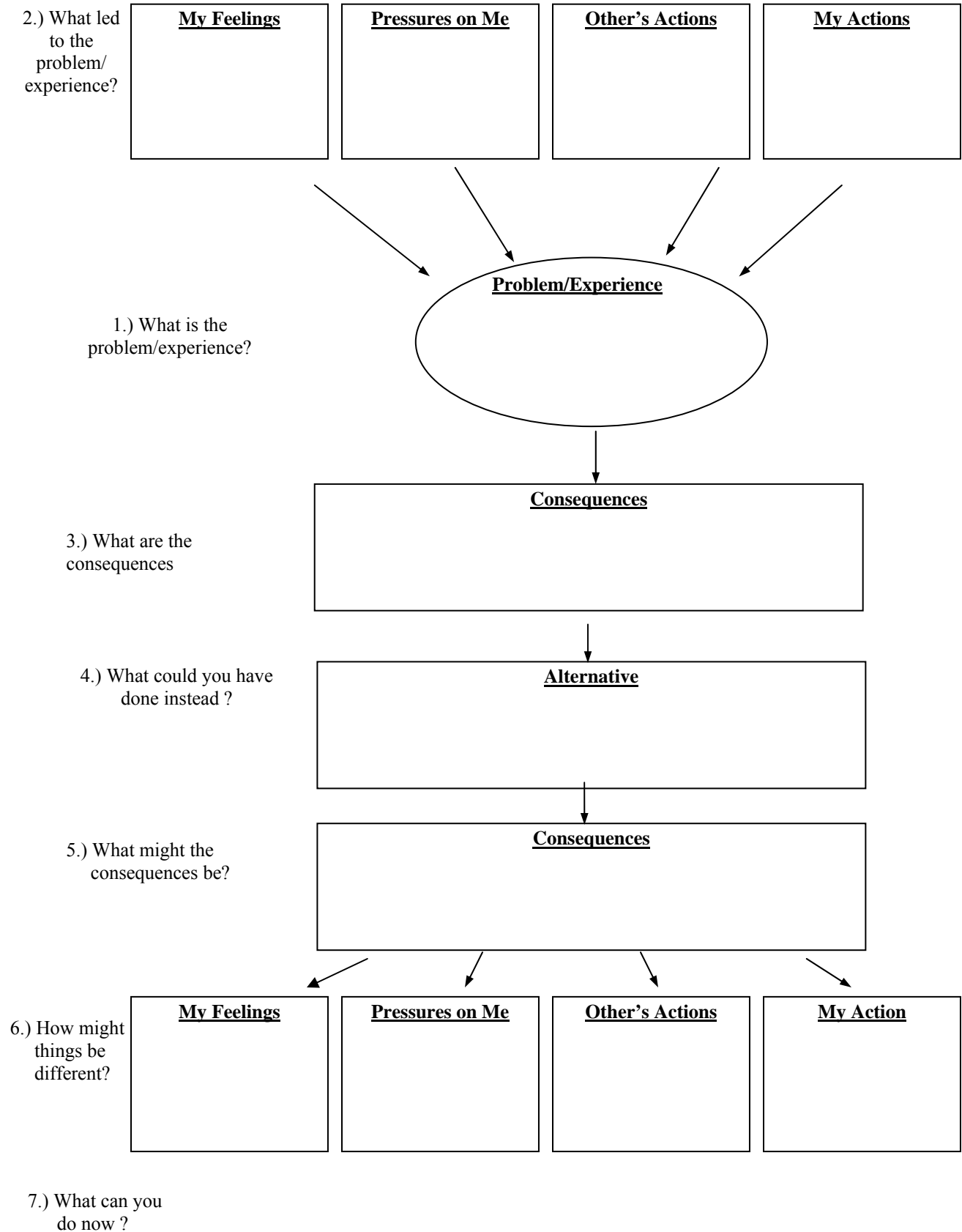
Think of yourself as your own professional life manager. It is your goal to make sure that you have the skills to make good choices, the patience to take the time to determine what these choices are, the self-confidence to believe in your abilities, and the wisdom to find ways to improve skills in weaker areas. The better you perform on your job, the better the rewards become. When you begin to doubt that you can't do any better or can't succeed, you can change your perspective by asking yourself empowering questions to help keep you motivated.

Some EMPOWERING QUESTIONS you can ask to stay on track are:

Am I ready for a change?  
What do I want to bring into my life?  
What can I do now to change?  
What excites me about today?  
How can I share my gifts now?  
What can I learn here?  
How can I realize more meaning in my life?  
What is worthy of my attention?  
Who can I help here?  
What is the most empowering thing I can do or say right now?  
What can I contribute to this situation?  
What can I give today?  
What's funny about this situation?  
What am I grateful for?  
How can we move forward?  
What brings me joy in that experience?  
How did I make a difference today?  
What are the thoughts and things that make you happy?  
How can I leave this place more beautiful than I found it?  
Can I laugh now?  
What do I believe about this situation?  
How can I help someone be empowered?  
What is the question?  
Am I ready to receive gifts?  
Who am I becoming?

(Marshall, 1991)

Session 14 Handout 4  
BLANK THOUGHT MAP



## **SESSION 15: PRESENTING YOUR PAST IN A JOB INTERVIEW**

### **Session 15 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*  
*Message to Group Participants*  
*Session Objectives*  
*Materials*  
*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*  
Identifying Thinking Errors  
Preparing for a More Competitive Interview  
Interview Tips Reminder  
Practicing Presenting the Past  
Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 15 Handout 1 THINKING ERRORS: A REVIEW  
Session 15 Handout 2 CORRECTING THINKING ERRORS  
Session 15 Handout 3 EXPLORING HOW YOU HAVE CHANGED?  
Session 15 Handout 4 INTERVIEW TIPS

## **SESSION 15**

### **PRESENTING YOUR PAST IN A JOB INTERVIEW**

#### Message to Employment Counselor:

This session gives participants an opportunity to practice and fine-tune their interview skills so they will be ready to upgrade their employment to get a better job. When presenting their past for a new and better job, it is important for participants to put their past in perspective in order to help them create a better future. To provide this perspective, this session reviews thinking errors about the past and ways to change thinking errors in order to show a potential employer that they have a good attitude towards employment.

#### Message to Group Participants:

“At this point in the employment program, you may be bored with your job or feel that with your skills you could get a better job. After all, you have worked hard to build your employment skills, you have developed effective problem solving skills, and you have maintained your recovery. It is logical that you also would want to further your career. This session focuses on how to present your “new and improved” self and skills in an interview.”

#### Session Objectives:

- Improve interview skills to upgrade employment.
- Learn to continue to identify and correct thinking errors.
- Learn how thinking errors can give you a bad attitude.
- Practice presenting your past in a mock interview.

#### Materials:

Handout 1     Thinking Errors: A Review  
Handout 2     Correcting Thinking Errors  
Handout 3     Exploring How You’ve Changed  
Handout 4     Interview Tips

#### Employment Counselor’s Session Introduction:

“Wanting to quit your job or begin looking for a new one is very common when your skill level is higher than the skills required for your job. “

Ask: “What types of thought are you having about your current job? Is anyone considering changing jobs?

“If you feel dissatisfied with your job, or if you feel that you have reached your potential, it is important to consider applying for a better job. You may want better hours, more benefits, or a higher salary now that you have increased your skills. However, jobs with

flexible hours and better pay and/or benefits are generally competitive. Job interview skills can be a factor to obtain a higher salary and training opportunities that may be provided on a new job. This means that improving your interview skills is important so you can interview more competitively. This includes both appropriate interview behavior and presenting your past in a way that focuses on your strengths, presents your skills, and shows you have a good attitude.

### **Identifying Thinking Errors**

“In previous sessions, we discussed thinking errors, or maladaptive and automatic thoughts we may have which interfere with recovery and taking responsibility for ourselves. It is very difficult to change some thinking errors, and it is important to continue to try to recognize thinking errors, especially when interviewing for a better job. In order to make a good impression with your potential employer, you’ll want to take responsibility for your past, focus on how you’ve developed your skills, and demonstrate you are ready to take on more responsibility and are motivated to continue improving your life.”

“When interviewing for a more competitive job, potential employers will be looking for several ideal characteristics in a new employee. In addition to skills and a reliable work history, employers will try to decide whether you have a good attitude. Generally, interviewees who have a good attitude will be more likely to be offered a job. Those with a bad attitude will likely not be considered for the job regardless of their skills or stable work history.”

“Thinking errors can cause people to have bad attitudes. There are several general thinking errors which are important to improve your attitude including those that involve taking responsibility for your actions and having confidence in your strengths and yourself. For example, one thinking error might be that you feel that mistakes are never your fault. If you blame your co-workers and boss for all the problems at work, this will let the prospective employer know that you have a bad attitude because you can’t take responsibility for the mistakes you might make at work. Employers want employees who are willing to take responsibility for their mistakes and work hard to create a pleasant working environment. One way to convey this information in an interview for a new job is to improve your attitude by recognizing and correcting your thinking errors.”

Distribute Handout 1: “Thinking Errors” and review these thinking errors. Then distribute Handout 2: “Correcting Thinking Errors” to help participants correct these thinking errors after they are identified.

### **Preparing for a More Competitive Interview**

“There may be no way to escape a drug abuse or criminal history on a job application. For each new application you fill out, you may be asked about previous criminal convictions or previous problems with drugs and/or alcohol. In previous sessions, we discussed ways to handle presenting your past in an interview. As a reminder, we talked

about by focusing on strengths first and then discussing past problems if asked. However, since you are likely ready to apply for a better job, you will need to present yourself in a different, improved way. Now that you have maintained recovery, you will also be able to enhance your interview with examples of how much you changed. As you present your past to potential employers, you will want to spend the most time focusing on how you have changed over the past few months. This can include holding a full time job, having good references, and staying clean and sober. It should also include the ways you changed your thinking errors into a more positive attitude. You should not be afraid to be open and honest about how you changed. It takes determination to overcome the obstacles you faced in your life.”

Distribute Handout 3: “Exploring How You Have Changed” and help participants identify the ways they have changed. This will help prepare them to discuss their positive changes in an interview.

### **Interview Tips Reminder**

“As we discussed before, there are several guidelines to follow when you prepare for a job interview. All of these guidelines apply even more when interviewing for a better job.”

Distribute Handout 4: “Interview Tips” to remind participants of appropriate interview behavior.

### **Practicing Presenting the Past**

Use the following prompts if participants are having trouble presenting their past. It may be helpful to “present” the following “pasts” as a group activity. Remind participants about the importance of correcting thinking errors and discussing how they have changed since. The employment counselor may want to cut the following into strips so scenarios can be “drawn” and then presented in a mock interview. You might also refer to Handout 2 to help participants focus on honesty and responsibility when disclosing their past.

1. I held my job as a construction worker for eight months. I am bored with my job because I could be making more money with the skills I have developed working on construction. I have an interview with a construction company for a supervisory position. I have four arrests that I had to report on my job application.
2. I was arrested two years ago for a felony trafficking charge. When I was doing drugs, I would quit a job as soon as I got my first paycheck. Now that I am clean and sober, I have been working as a janitor at the local high school for a year. I have become very good at general maintenance like plumbing and simple electrical work. I am interested in applying to be an apprentice at an electrician’s shop.
3. When I was in high school I was pretty good at computers but then started running with the “wrong crowd.” A few years later I was busted three times for buying crack. After I got out of jail, a drug program helped me find a job at a help desk answering problems people have with



their computers. This program paid for me to get a degree in computers from a local college. Now, I have turned my life around and have a real degree.

### **Closing Comments**

Now that participants are competing for positions that require more skills, their attitude and the way they present themselves becomes even more important than in entry-level jobs. In fact, participants may find that employers will choose either to hire or not to hire based on things that have less to do with job ability and more with ability to “fit in” with the workplace culture and general attitude. Participants have heard that attitude is everything and in many cases this is true. In general, employers believe they can teach people how to do a job if they have the basic skills. If a person has a negative attitude, he or she won’t be pleasant to be around and won’t be very willing to learn. Thinking errors often cause participants to have this poor attitude. Therefore, participants who correct their thinking errors and are able to clearly show the “new you” to a potential employer will be in a good position to get a better job.

(Source: Adapted from Loebig, 2003)

**Session 15 Handout 1**  
**THINKING ERRORS: A REVIEW**

(Source: Adapted from Loebig, 2003)

**1. CLOSED THINKING:**

- ✓ Do you keep secrets?
- ✓ Do you criticize others but not yourself?
- ✓ Do you "leave out information" when talking to others?

**2. VICTIMSTANCE:**

- ✓ Do you tell yourself and others that you will not make it because you have a record?
- ✓ Do you blame others for negative or unpleasant situations in your life?
- ✓ Do you have anger for others who may have snitched or whose mistake may have led to your arrest?

**3. VIEWING SELF AS A GOOD PERSON/ FAILURE TO CONSIDER INJURY TO OTHERS:**

- ✓ Do you have excuses that explain your negative behavior?
- ✓ Do you believe circumstances beyond your control forced you to commit crimes?
- ✓ Do you avoid thinking about the harm you have caused others in the past?
- ✓ Do you focus on doing good deeds to prove you are a "good" person?

**4. NOT TRYING:**

- ✓ Do you seem to have energy only for things that you want to do or that you enjoy?
- ✓ Do you often say to yourself or others, "I can't"?
- ✓ Do you often quit when things get difficult?

**5. LACK OF INTEREST IN RESPONSIBLE PERFORMANCE:**

- ✓ Do you avoid any behavior that may cause people to call you a "goody-goody"?
- ✓ Do you tend to use sneaky ways of getting what you want, even with positive goals?
- ✓ Do you only want to do things that result in an immediate payoff?

**6. LACK OF TIME PERSPECTIVE:**

- ✓ Do you keep making the same mistakes and wonder each time how it happens?
- ✓ Do you find yourself wanting "what you want when you want it" without considering the consequences?
- ✓ Do you expect instant success and expect big results after a short time of pursuing a goal?

**7. FEAR OF FEAR:**

- ✓ Do you believe you will have a short life?
- ✓ Do you fear being insulted, disrespected, or controlled by others?
- ✓ Do you believe that sharing guilty feelings will result in your getting "caught"?

**8. THE POWER THRUST:**

- ✓ Do you like the feeling of controlling or "getting one over" on someone?
- ✓ Do you like to plan ways to get others to behave or act the way you want them to?
- ✓ Do you often think about "going out in a big way" if you are going to get caught?

**9. UNIQUENESS:**

- ✓ Do only a few people really know you?
- ✓ Do you avoid telling others what you are going to do for fear they will “mess things up”?
- ✓ Do you believe you should not have to work for success like “other” people do?

**10. OWNERSHIP ATTITUDE:**

- ✓ Do you think “wanting” is the same as “having”?
- ✓ Do you get upset when others do not agree with you?
- ✓ Do you usually insist on having your way?

**11. CONCRETE THINKING:**

- ✓ Do you define right or wrong by what is going on outside of your actions or choices?
- ✓ Do you spend time thinking of ways to get away with things?
- ✓ Do you decide not to break a law or lie only if the risk is very high?

**Questions to consider:**

Which of these errors will be the hardest to overcome when presenting your past?

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List 5 things you don't like to talk about and why.


**EXAMPLES OF THINKING ERRORS: SOUND FAMILIAR?**

“I don't lie. I said I wasn't at work on Friday, I just didn't tell you I was fired.”

“That's stupid. You don't know what you are talking about.”

“I have a criminal record. That is why no one will hire me.”

“I only took it because I needed it. No one will give me a good job so that is what they get.”

“You should hire me because I am a good person—all I did was smoke a little pot. It shouldn't be illegal anyway.”

“So what if I didn't go to work. They can't kick me out of the program if I am not using.”

“This program is too much work. I am just going to do what I want and enjoy my time out.”

“This job doesn't pay enough. I'm better off selling again. At least they'll get off my back about child support.”

“I can't stand my boss telling me what to do. I'd rather be in jail than deal with this.”

“It won't matter, the Judge likes me.”

“What do you mean I got a bad report from work; I was only late a few times.”

“I know my probation will be revoked anyway so who cares?”

## Session 15 Handout 2 CORRECTING THINKING ERRORS

(Source: Adapted from Loebig, 2003)

**DISCLOSURE:** Tell the truth! This includes sharing your desires and your fears.

*When presenting your past you can say:* “I am very excited about this position. Although at the time of my arrest I was very angry, I am very thankful because without that I would not be the person I am today. I have new skills and because of my experiences, I am very sensitive to the needs of others. Today, I am very dedicated to doing a good job. There is no feeling like knowing I have done my best.”

**RECEPTIVITY:** Take what you hear in group and apply these things to life.

*When presenting your past you can say:* “In the past, I used to be worried about being cool and following the crowd. Even though people would tell me I had talent, I refused to believe it. Now, I see my skills and areas that I would like to develop further. I know what I need to do now and have started building a good track record to prove it.”

**SELF-CRITICISM:** Be humble and take responsibility.

*When presenting your past you can say:* “I realize that you may be hesitant to hire me because of my criminal record. I understand this and want you to know that if you would be willing to give me a chance, I will start at entry level for \$7.00 even though I know you usually hire at \$8.00. I understand that even though I have been a manager in the past I need to prove myself to you. If you like my work after the probation period, would you agree to increase my salary?”

**USE LOGIC, NOT ANGER TO FIX SITUATIONS:** Think before acting.

*When presenting your past you can say:* “In situations that are difficult at work, I will think about the other person’s point-of-view before getting into a discussion. I realize that although I like to be right and have my way as much as the next person, teamwork and good respectful relationships with co-workers usually help the work to get done in the best and most efficient way.

**Session 15 Handout 3**  
**EXPLORING HOW YOU HAVE CHANGED?**

A responsible choice I make today is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Things that used to sacre me but don't anymore: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ways I used to treat people and how I've changed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List 6 things that you have in common with other people:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Other ways I have changed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*"Why am I afraid to tell you who I am? Because if I tell you who I am, you may not like who I am and that's all I have. To reveal you openly takes the rarest kind of courage." John Powell*

How does this apply to your life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How would you explain to a potential employer what you have learned from your criminal involvement?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Session 15 Handout 4

### INTERVIEW TIPS

***Be on time.*** This shows your ability to plan and manage your time and to respect the time of others. It's better to build in an extra 15 minutes and walk around the building once or twice than to arrive late.

***Be polite.*** Being polite tells others a lot about your attitude and what you will be like to work with day after day. Interviewers often ask the receptionist, following the interview, what impression the candidate made when he came in the front door. First impressions are most important and may make it or break it for you.

***Pay attention and use clear speech.*** Have an idea of what you are going to say before you get to the interview. Speak clearly and answer questions that are asked. Listen carefully during the interview and so you will have a better idea later if this is a job that can provide the things you are looking for in a career.

***Be aware of your body language.*** Good eye contact, and sitting up straight indicates a sense of professionalism. Not looking directly into the interviewer's eyes probably will be interpreted as a lack of professionalism or a lack of honesty.

***Be honest.*** Remember that a good lie can never cover up a bad truth--at some point, the truth will come out and often a lost job is the consequence for lying on an application. Is it worth the risk? If a lie is uncovered, even if the consequence is not losing the job, your employer probably will have trouble trusting you. (Think also how you feel when you get something by being dishonest—earning something the right way feels good!)

***Be assertive.*** Calling after an interview to check on a position shows initiative. Employers often prefer to hire assertive people who call for feedback following the meeting. This is also an opportunity to show how much you want to work for a particular company and that you are looking for a career, not a job. (For skilled labor, it is a good idea to bring a portfolio that gives a description of your experience. This may be particularly helpful if your employment history is not extensive but your skills are. A picture is worth a thousand words!)

***Be prepared.*** Ask questions to show you are looking for a job match and that you want to learn about the company to make the best decision—you are not just looking for a job, you're looking for a job with *this* employer. If you will be interviewing with more than one person, it is a good idea to bring enough copies of your resume for each interviewer.

***Be professional.*** Make sure your resume and cover letters are neat and clean. Check them for errors. Employers are likely looking for accuracy, creativity and a sense of sincerity.

***Send a thank-you note.*** Short and simple is good. Thank the interviewer for their time and offer to answer any other questions that may come up.

## **SESSION 16: LETTING GO OF THE LIFESTYLE**

### **Session 16 Outline:**

*Message to the Employment Counselor*

*Message to Group Participants*

*Session Objectives*

*Materials*

*Employment Counselor's Session Introduction*

Avoiding Relapse Traps

Evaluating Existing Support

Establishing Support

Coping With Support Problems

Making It All Stick

Closing Comments

### **HANDOUTS**

Session 16 Handout 1 TRAPS TO AVOID

Session 16 Handout 2 EVALUATING FRIENDSHIPS TO HELP RECOVERY

Session 16 Handout 3 BLANK THOUGHT MAP

Session 16 Handout 4 THINKING ABOUT YOUR LIFESTYLE

## **SESSION 16**

### **LETTING GO OF THE LIFESTYLE**

#### Message to Employment Counselor:

Recovering persons who have achieved months of sobriety may be surprised at how difficult it can be to let go of their previous lifestyle. It may be possible that the temptation to show former drug friends that they are still around, will build until relapse occurs. Therefore, it is important that participants begin to consider ways they are continuing an addiction lifestyle when they associate with old friends and how they can let go of that lifestyle.

One of the most difficult transitions for a recovering person is changing people, places, and things. Developing a non-substance abusing support system is key in a person's ability to continue living a drug-free and crime-free life. It is important to recognize the difficult process of developing support networks. In fact, many participants may not recognize the amount of care and support they receive. Some participants may realize this level of support only after leaving treatment. In fact, participants may avoid using this support because they believe it reflects negatively on their ability to manage their lives.

Letting go of old people, places, and things is especially important for employment because of all the risks to employment that come along with using drugs. The more participants are able to establish support with non-using people, the more likely they will be able to remain clean and a responsible employee. Thus, the goal in this session is to help participants recognize the importance of surrounding themselves with people who support them and to learn to be open to friendships with healthy people.

#### Message to Group Participants:

“The goal of this session is to help you identify a support system that will support your recovery and your employment. Throughout this discussion, you may find that people or groups that you consider to be supportive may not really be supportive. You may also learn that people you view as negative or “always on you” can be sources of support. We will discuss ways to evaluate your social support system and ways to make positive changes in your support network.

#### Session Objectives:

- Discuss the importance of getting rid of drug-related paraphernalia and drug using friends.
- Learn how to avoid relapse traps
- Learn to evaluate friends based on how they can support sobriety.
- Discuss places to look for supportive friends.
- Make a commitment for continued change.



## Materials:

- Handout 1     Traps to Avoid
- Handout 2     Evaluating Friendships to Help Recovery
- Handout 3     Thought Map
- Handout 4     Thinking About Your Lifestyle

## Employment Counselor's Session Introduction:

“As someone in recovery, it may surprise you that giving up your previous lifestyle may actually be more difficult than giving up drugs. For many people, using drugs and having a drug-using lifestyle go hand-in-hand. Perhaps you feel as though you have gone from a lifestyle that was full of thrills and excitement to one that does not have anything to offer but a boring, sober life. However, the longer you are sober and drug free, the more important treatment groups actually become even though you may feel like avoiding them.”

“When you first give up drugs and first achieve sobriety, the physical feeling is very good. This initial period of sobriety is a time when most people are very motivated to stay clean and recover. In time, however, many recovering persons can begin to feel they are missing out on life. In fact, it may not be uncommon for recovering persons to feel the only way to ensure sobriety is to stay home or attend meetings if they are not at work. However, even with the best intentions, avoiding all possible triggers could be a trigger.”

### **Avoiding Relapse Traps**

“Avoiding new experiences and people for the rest of your life for fear of relapse could leave you lonely and bored. Your thinking about what a recovery lifestyle should be like may land you in several traps which might either increase the likelihood of relapse, or make you not able to reap the benefits of recovery.”

Distribute Handout 1: “Traps to Avoid” and discuss a few of the things that past users tend to do while trying to stay sober during recovery.

### **Evaluating Existing Support**

“It may be possible to stay sober by avoiding everyone and everything for a short period of time, but eventually you will miss “good” times and “good” friends. As this happens, it will become increasingly difficult to not go back to “old times” with “old friends.” However, it may be helpful to first evaluate “old friends” by how they will be able to support you in your recovery.”

Ask participants to discuss their old friends and how they will help them stay clean and sober and keep a job. Encourage participants to think about ways that old friends or neighborhoods may prevent personal progress or encourage continued drug use or criminal activity and decreased employment. Drug using friends may encourage participants to return to a drug using

lifestyle. Emphasize how old friends may have hurt their ability to maintain employment. A basic point to stress is-- The wrong kind of lifestyle will affect your ability to stay clean and sober, and thus affect their ability to maintain a good job.

Distribute Handout 2: “Evaluating Friendships to Help Recovery.” Discuss how participants may need to look past family and past friends for social support.

### **Establishing Support**

“An important step to take in developing a support system is to identify what you need. Perhaps, you will find that there is a support system that is just waiting to be developed. If your experience with developing friendships has caused trouble, consider which situations and/or which people caused the problem. Remember that just because you choose not to associate with someone does not mean you are judging others. It means that you have determined that the situation will not contribute to your drug-free and crime-free life. You have experience with being drug-free, working, attending meetings, and starting to restructure your life. It is important to respect the past but to keep your distance from “old people, places, and things” so you can begin removing barriers to developing a healthy social support system.”

“When you think about a support system, you may begin to feel you would like more support. Others may feel that you are better off being alone. Your experience with involving others in your life may be negative, and you may fear that forming relationships with others will only lead to trouble. However, by changing the people you hung out with in the past to people who are more supportive of your sobriety, you may find a completely different type of friendship. It is important to remember that you have changed throughout the process of recovery, and may benefit from seeking friendships with people who are more like the “new” you.”

Ask participants:

“What are some ways that you can begin to develop a healthy and supportive social network?”

“What do you think is holding you back from having the social support system you want?”

Ask participants to think of places where they might look for people who are more supportive of their recovery. Also, discuss finding supportive people who are living their life as participants wish they were living. For example, support people who are clean, sober, and employed. Use the following examples if needed to help with discussion.

Family	Treatment staff	Sports leagues
Non-using friends	Church members	School
AA/NA Home Group	Community	Employers/coworkers

## **Coping With Support Problems**

Distribute Handout 3: “Blank Thought Map” and present each of the stories to participants. Do not read the stories. Have the group problem solve to decide how each person should deal with the “supportive” people in their life. Participants should complete the blank thought map to facilitate this discussion. Discuss whether the person’s support system needs to be changed in each situation.

### *Joe*

“Joe is recovering from addiction to crack cocaine and marijuana and has been clean and sober for seven months. When Joe was using, he stole from his family and sold his wife’s diamond engagement ring because he couldn’t keep a job to pay his bills. His father passed away five months ago after a long illness. Joe’s family is angry with Joe for not being there during the last part of his father’s life. Joe thinks his family should be proud of him for being drug free and for keep a job. Joe told his mother that if he relapses it will be her fault for making him feel guilty about his father’s death. “

### *Tammy*

“Tammy’s best friend Margot invited her to celebrate her first paycheck from her new job by renting a movie and cooking dinner. Tammy felt very lucky to have friend who could help her follow curfew rules and stay out of trouble. However, when Tammy got to the apartment, Margot was there with a table all set with everything they needed to get high. Tammy was shocked and began to talk about how hard she had worked for ten months of sobriety and new job. She was devastated to watch as her best friend ignore her and start to get high.”

### *Rose*

“Rose has been clean for five months. She recently got promoted at work and bought a new car. Rose came from a family where several relatives used. Her relatives that are clean, don’t pressure her to help the drug using relatives. This is because they are afraid it will cause Rose to use again, since the last time Rose relapsed was when she was with a drug using relative. However, the better Rose does, the more her family pressures her to help them get off drugs. Rose worries her family will think she is abandoning them if she refuses to help her drug using relatives. Rose also worries that her family will think she is too good for them if she ignores them. However, Rose is afraid she’ll be pulled back into a drug using lifestyle if she tries to help her family get clean.”

## **Making It All Stick**

“Throughout this session, you learned how to begin finding people who will support your recovery. However, this can be very difficult when old “friends” are close and familiar. Thus, in order for you to have a healthy and supportive network of friends, you may need to make lifestyle changes which make old “friends” less accessible.”

Distribute Handout 4: “Thinking About Your Lifestyle” and ask for a commitment to future change from participants.

### **Closing Comments**

One common mistake after treatment is to immediately begin to remove all positive supports made while in treatment. However, keeping positive people in your life can help shield you from negative thinking. With this support you can have problems and slip but someone will catch you. Also, you can support others. It may be a good idea to continue checking with these individuals. Having someone to talk to about the positive aspects of being drug free is important for your recovery. As you continue your sobriety, continue to find people who will support your “new” life including staying drug free and continuing successful employment.

## **Session 16 Handout 1**

### **TRAPS TO AVOID**

**RESCUING OTHERS.** Taking on other people's problems and trying to help others who are involved in illegal activity will cause problems. If someone is involved in a situation that could jeopardize your recovery or your legal status, it is best to not get involved. Remember there are professionals who can help.

**SHUTTING OUT OTHERS.** Recovering persons should not cut all social interaction from their life. Shut others out can be a problem. Participating in church and community activities can be rewarding to develop relationships with people who have common interests and can help you from feeling isolated or alone.

**NOT ASKING FOR HELP.** You are not the only person to struggle with feelings and responsibilities associated with recovery. There are people who can help with your recovery, but you need to ask for help.

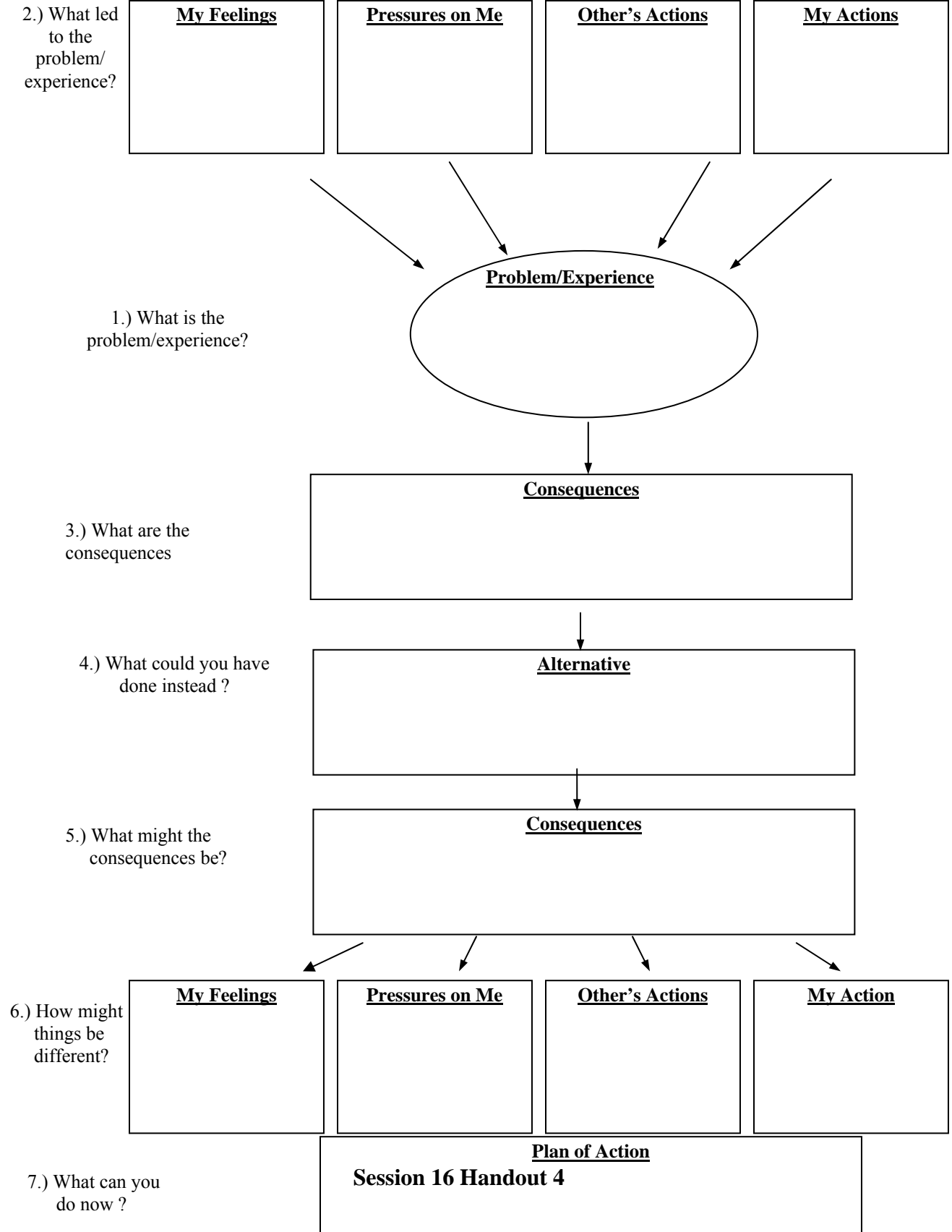
**NOT SHARING YOUR FEARS.** Admitting a fear of relapse or fear of not being able to do a job as well as other employees can be very difficult. Sometimes saying the "fear" out loud takes away the power of fear away.

**THE TRAP OF THINKING YOU WON'T FIT IN WITH NON-USERS.** Many people who are in recovery think that people who don't use drugs don't have anything in common. This thought is natural but untrue. Just keep in mind that when you are not using, you are not doing the things that kept you separate from others in the past.

**Session 16 Handout 2**  
**EVALUATING FRIENDSHIPS TO HELP RECOVERY**

- 1. DEVELOPING FRIENDSHIPS IS IMPORTANT.** How do you develop new friends? Before starting a new friendship with a person think about how the person manages their life. Do they use drugs? Do they have a job and spend free time in a positive way? How about their relationships with other people? Do they always seem to be in the middle of a crisis or do they seem interested in yours? Keep in mind that this is different from being judgmental, but this is an essential part of what you need to be drug free and crime free and to build a new support system away from places and people who use drugs.
- 2. SOME FAMILY MEMBERS MAY NOT BE SUPPORTIVE.** Being in recovery can be lonely. Unfortunately, not all family members will support you. Some may not believe that the changes you are making will be lasting. Others, who continue to use alcohol or drugs, may be envious of your success. Once you start making money and become stable, family members may ask for money and become angry if you do not give it to them. A lack of support from this important part of your life can be very difficult. However, it is important for you to take responsibility for your past actions and give others time to notice positive changes.
- 3. SET BOUNDARIES TO PROTECT RECOVERY.** One of the most difficult parts of recovery is learning to change old habits—to stay away from people, places, and things. This problem may be more important if you live in the same neighborhood, continue to see the same friends, or if members of your family continue to use drugs. It is important that you learn your triggers and set guidelines for your life so a crisis can be prevented. Setting boundaries can help you stay drug and crime free for life.
- 4. PEOPLE YOU USED WITH PROBABLY STILL USE.** Try to keep away from people in your “old life”. It is important to build a life that supports a drug-free lifestyle. The fewer healthy supports you use, the more difficult it will be to remain drug free.

**Session 16 Handout 3  
BLANK THOUGHT MAP**



## **THINKING ABOUT YOUR LIFESTYLE**

List lifestyle changes you made:

List lifestyle changes you are willing to make:

What help will you need from others to make these lifestyle changes?

What changes will be necessary so these changes can be long-term?



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