OPTIONS

A
COGNITIVE CHANGE
PROGRAM

OPTIONS: A Cognitive Change Program

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SECTION 1: *Introduction*

A. The Principle of Cognitive Change

Cognitive change is based on the simple fact that how people think has a controlling effect on how they act.

What we do in our minds controls what we do in our lives. Therefore, by controlling our thinking, we can exercise control over our lives.

This simple principle has many applications.

Using cognitive methods, we can control aspects of our lives that might seem beyond our ability to control. Our most automatic reactions and responses – those things we do "without thinking" are usually connected with attitudes, beliefs, mind sets, and habits of thinking that we perform automatically. We can identify these cognitive acts and can, eventually, learn to control them.

> Our target population is criminal offenders, and the specific behavioral goal is to change their criminal behavior.

Our personal relationships and the way others perceive us are determined in part by our cognitive habits, including our automatic thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes. By controlling these cognitive habits, we exercise a measure of control over our relationships with others.

Cognitive methods of personal control have been applied to nearly all aspects of life. Addictions, depression, personality disorders, and a variety of other conditions are targeted by cognitive methods of intervention.

This manual takes a more narrow focus. Our target population is criminal offenders, and the specific behavioral goal is to change their criminal behavior.

Our approach is not "therapy". Instead, we teach offenders a set of well-defined and specific skills. We teach them to identify their habits of thinking that directly connect with their criminal behavior. We help them to see and appreciate the scope and consequences of their present ways of thinking. We teach them techniques for controlling and changing these habits of thinking. We help them to see that they can, in fact, change. And finally, we leave the choice to them.

> Cognitive change is self-change.

Cognitive change is self-change. The techniques of cognitive self-direction taught in this program can be applied by an individual only to his or her own thinking.

B. Antisocial Thinking

Antisocial thinking is very seldom a simple matter of imagining crimes or plotting assaults. With repeat offenders, there is almost always a more subtle network of attitudes, beliefs, and

thinking patterns that have become self-validating and which prove – in the offender's mind, at the moment he performs it – that his behavior is right.

Common themes of antisocial thinking include the belief and mind-set that they are being victimized. Many offenders are accustomed to feeling unfairly treated and have learned a defiant, hostile attitude as part of their basic orientation toward life and other people. From the cognitive perspective, both their perception of being victimized and their hostile response to it are learned cognitive behaviors. They are learned ways of thinking that are reinforced by experiences of success and self-gratification. For instance, the sense of victim outrage is itself a feeling of strength and righteousness, much preferable (in their mind) to feelings of weakness and vulnerability.

Offenders often think they are entitled to a kind of absolute freedom in the way they conduct their lives. They may picture themselves as living in isolation from the world, in a kind of world of their own. In their subjective world, they are in absolute control and have the absolute right to do as they please. From this point of view, any restriction of their freedom is resented as an unjust intrusion.

When the real world fails to comply with their expectations and demands, they take a stance of righteous defiance. Relationships with other people are dominated by a struggle for power. Cooperation is seldom more than a passing convenience. Win-lose ("us and them") is the dominant form of personal relationship.

Righteous anger, retribution, and license to do as they please, without regard to rules and consequences, become dominant themes of living. It all hold together in a kind of self-supporting logic.

THE THINKING NETWORK

Isolation

Entitlement	*Power Struggle*
Victimized	
Righteous Anger	*Retribution*
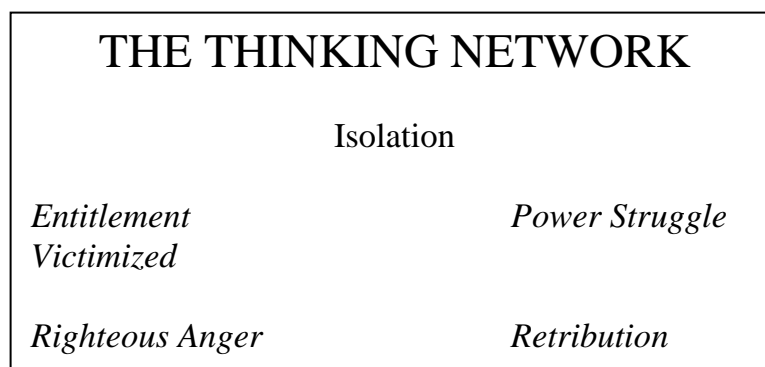
This network of attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns on the part of offenders set up an adversarial relation to the world around them. Winning is defined in their mind as forcing someone else to lose. The gratification that comes with this kind of winning is, in some offenders, the only real satisfaction and gratification they ever learned.

Antisocial winning has lots of forms. It may consist of direct physical assault. It may involve controlling people through gear and intimidation. Some armed robbers, for instance, take gratification in making their victims fear for their lives. It may involve the thrill and

excitement of stealing, or lying, or conning, or in some other way breaking the rules and getting away with it.

> One offender in a treatment group broke down in tears when he realized, and admitted to himself, that he never felt really good about himself except when he was doing something he wasn't supposed to be doing, and getting away with it.

When offenders win their struggle with the world, they may feel a towering sense of elation. They're on top of the world. When they lose – for instance, when they are caught at a crime and held accountable they feel terrible, but usually not for long. Their basic cognitive structure of attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns provides them with a ready interpretation of their difficulties that takes the sting out of their failure. They picture themselves as the victim and righteous anger displaces the feelings of loss and failure. With victim-stance thinking, there is no room for remorse. Righteous anger produces feelings and images of power.

> *VICIOUS CYCLE*
>
> *Victory   Defeat*
>
> *Reinforcement*

This logic is a vicious cycle. Whether they win or lose, the underlying cognitive structure is reinforced.

Two Case Examples

1. Tom is 28 years old, white, with a GED. He has recently been released from his third incarceration. His offenses include numerous misdemeanors, including breaking and entering and assault. He has one conviction for assault on a police officer.

    Tom was on furlough as part of his reintegration into the community. Tom was experiencing great difficulty with the strict furlough conditions. He was detected in numerous technical violations – social contact with unauthorized persons, and going to places he was not authorized.

    In treatment group, Tom reported the feelings and thoughts he had experienced before he committed these violations.

> **THOUGHTS**
>
> I know that if I do these things, I will be going back to jail.
>
> It's really starting to get to me.
>
> I feel locked up in my own apartment.
>
> I shouldn't have to follow these rules.
>
> Maybe it would be better to just go back to jail and get my sentence over with.
>
> I feel like I'm not in charge of my life anymore.
>
> I can't stand it.

Tom's thinking process made it practically certain that he would violate the conditions of his furlough. For a short time, he could fight his impulses, but he was clearly fighting a losing battle against himself.

As he pictured it, his integrity as a person was at stake. The only means he had left himself to feel in charge of his own life was to break the rules and conditions being imposed upon him. Given his way of thinking, he had no good choices.

2.   Bill was 30 years old, white, and a high school dropout. He was incarcerated for a vicious assault on a drug dealer who had been supplying Bill with marijuana.

   In jail, Bill had a reputation for being tough. His own image of himself was a kind of generous person who never hurt others unless (as he put it) "they asked for it."

   In treatment group, Bill described a situation in jail in which someone had stolen money from him and his cell partner.

   He reported the following thoughts:

I was going good until I discovered the money was missing.

I thought, "I'm going to kill the S.O.B."

"I'll get even."

"I'll find out who did it."

"Somebody will let it out."

"I'm going to break his fingers."

I felt betrayed. Why pick on me?

I always give, whenever anyone asks for anything.

Bill was very comfortable with himself. His image of himself as kind and generous was unfazed by his frequent acts of violence because these instances were always, in his mind, righteous acts. In fact, it was because he was (in his own mind) such a good and generous person that transgressions against him were particularly horrible and unforgivable. Bill used his image of himself as a good person as part of a justification of cruel assaults upon others.

When he was asked in group how often he felt the need to take revenge against people who had harmed him, he smiled and said, "Lots of times."

Bill had learned to enjoy the feeling of hurting others. He had learned a way of thinking which gave him license to hurt others, while bolstering his own sense of himself as a good person.

The Challenge of Cognitive Change

Offenders like Tom and Bill pose tough challenges to any program of change. They have convinced themselves, deeply and emotionally, that they are right. So why should they change? Punishment just adds fuel to the fire of their resentment. And they are not likely to take traditional therapy seriously. They will either exploit therapy to support their feelings of being victimized, or resent it as a disguised attempt to control them.

Motivation on part of offenders to change themselves is a primary goal of this program. Strategies for developing motivation are discussed in Section 2, "Communication and Intervention."

Motivation by offenders to change themselves is a primary goal of this program.

We do not assume that offenders in the program start with motivation to change. On the contrary, the program is designed for offenders who are deeply, and perhaps aggressively, antisocial. These are people who have made themselves comfortable with antisocial lifestyles.

C.   Goals of the Program

There are 4 goals integral to the program.

1.   <u>Cooperation</u>.

We set the explicit goal of achieving a cooperative relationship between staff and offenders in the program. Program philosophy, techniques, and structure are all designed to promote the goal of cooperation. Cooperation is not only essential to the effectiveness of the program, it is a significant end in itself. For offenders who have based much of their life on conflict with authority, genuine cooperation in any significant and responsible endeavor is an important achievement. Responsible cooperation within this program can be a model for the future course of their lives.

2.   <u>Self Understanding</u>.

The self understanding that is essential to cognitive change consists of two major elements:

> 1)   Understanding how personal attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns make the individual's acts of criminal behavior virtually inevitable.

> 2)   Understanding how to control and change these attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns.

3.   <u>Motivation</u>.

Our goal is not to make offenders change, but to motivate them to change themselves.

> 1)   Motivation to change is based on self understanding. Offenders are made to be fully conscious of what they are doing, and they are made to choose.

> 2)   Each offender is made to realize that the thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes that determine their criminal behavior are within their own control.

> 3)   The offender is taught to see that other ways of thinking are available to them.

> 4)   Finally, the offender is made to choose: to change or to stay the same.

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Creating conscious choice is the heart of motivating antisocial offenders to change. We make them see their distortions of thinking for what they are, and challenge them to choose whether to keep them or change them. By being conscious of their responsibility for choosing, the antisocial choice is much less attractive.

Accountability for antisocial behavior is not an incentive to change. But neither is accountability used as a personal threat. The choice is theirs, but society will exercise its right to protect itself. The program is not coercive, but challenges offenders to make a conscious choice and to accept full responsibility for that choice.

The option to change is based, in part, on learning techniques of cognitive intervention and new cognitive behaviors. If an offender is convinced in his heart that he cannot survive in life except as he has learned to do it, the option to change his thinking will not be real to him. Alternative thinking patterns must be emotionally, as well as, cognitively available.

Most offenders have an emotional stake in remaining as they are. They know how to feel okay by relying on their old attitudes and ways of thinking. They don't know how to feel okay using new attitudes and new ways of thinking. The full project of cognitive change requires that we make change appear as a real and genuine possibility. We need to combine personal support and encouragement for change, along with the challenge of self change.

These strategies for developing offender motivation are a constant theme throughout this manual. (Section 2)

4.   Reduction of Antisocial Behavior.

The understanding of what to change, how to change, and motivation to change, will lead to the ultimate goal of the program: reduction of antisocial behavior. This goal will not be achieved in every offender who completes the program.

D.   Program Structure

1.   Program Phases

The program is divided into three phases.

a.   Orientation Phase I

Phase I is orientation. This is a series of 14 lessons designed to teach the basic concepts and techniques of cognitive change. The processes of self observation and cognitive intervention that form the foundation of cognitive change are introduced. The goal of Phase I is not mastery, but preliminary understanding of the basic processes.

Each participant in Phase I should achieve the expectations defined in the adjacent table.

PHASE I

TASKS

1. *Learn the basic principles of Cognitive Self Change:*

   a. *What we do in our minds controls what we do in our lives.*

   b. *We can control the course of our lives by controlling what we do in our minds.*

2. *Learn how to do "Thinking Reports" and how to keep a personal journal of thoughts and attitudes.*

3. *Identify one key pattern of thinking that has lead the individual to criminal behavior in the past.*

4. *Identify one realistic alternative or intervention in this pattern of thinking.*

PARTICIPATION

1. *Attendance, punctuality, and completion of assignments {to be defined by program staff}.*

2. *Keep an open channel of communication. This means:*

   a. *Each participant is expected to help himself and others to complete the tasks of Phase I by maintaining a businesslike approach to group work.*

   b. *Each participant will present real, meaningful, and honest thinking reports.*

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Phase I is 14 sessions over an 8-week period of time. Completion of Phase I is not automatic by attending all group sessions. The task and participation requirements must be met, as well. People who fail to meet minimum expectations of task completion and participation will be dropped from the program.

b.   Preparation – Phase II

Phase II is called, "Preparation for Change." In this phase, offenders use a technique of cognitive self observation, "thinking reports" to identify their key patterns of thinking that support their antisocial behavior. They also learn and practice techniques of cognitive intervention and alternative thinking skills. Finally, offenders put together a master plan for self change – a relapse prevention contract – based on their identified thinking patterns and interventions.

Each participant in Phase II should complete the expectations defined in the adjacent table.

PHASE II

TASKS

1. *Identify key patterns of thinking connected with their criminal behavior – past, present, and (potentially) future.*

2. *Plan and practice interventions in these patterns.*

3. *Prepare a relapse prevention plan based on:*

   a. *Identification of risk situation.*

   b. *Identification of high-risk thinking and attitudes.*

   c. *A risk management plan (interventions and alternatives).*

PARTICIPATION

1. *Attendance, punctuality, and completion of assignments.*

2. *Keeping an open channel of communication. This means:*

   a.   *Each participant is expected to help himself and others to complete the tasks of Phase II by maintaining a business like approach to group work.*

   b.   *Each participant will present real, meaningful, and honest thinking reports.*

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Time is determined by the offender's sentence, except that Phase II requires a minimum of 4 months and a maximum of 12 months.

> *Note: Completion of Phase II is not automatic after time requirements are met. The task and participation requirements must be met, as well. Those who fail to meet minimum expectations of task*

c. Practice – Phase III

The third phase is called, "Putting Change Into Practice." Phase III is ideally practiced as an aftercare or follow-up phase in the community following release from incarceration. If necessary, it can be practiced within an institution.

Phase III is the active practice of controlling behavior by controlling thinking. The Phase III group monitors and supports each offender's efforts at practicing cognitive interventions and new thinking patterns.

Participants in Phase III should achieve the expectations defined in the adjacent table.

PHASE III

TASKS

Phase III is devoted to Self Risk Management, organized around the relapse prevention completed in Phase II. The relapse prevention plan will be modified and updated.

Personal journals and group thinking reports are the primary tools for monitoring and practicing the skills of self risk management.

Each member will do a personal journal and thinking reports on:

    a.   situations which trigger high risk thinking, attitudes, or behaviors.

    b.   Their efforts to reduce that risk by controlling their thinking.

PARTICIPATION

1.   Attendance, punctuality, and completion of assignments.

2.   Keeping on open channel of communication. This means:

    a. Each participant is expected to help himself and others to complete the tasks of Phase III by maintaining a businesslike approach to group work.

    b. Each participant will present real, meaningful, and honest thinking reports.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

1.   Phase III is 12 months in length.
2.   In some cases, when an individual's risk is judged by their caseworker to be exceptionally high, they may be extended in Phase III an additional three months. A case conference with the caseworker, service provider, and the group member will be held for each three-month extension of Phase III. Completion of Phase III is not automatic after the time requirements are met. The task and participation requirements must be met as well. Those who fail to meet minimum expectations of task completion and participation will be dropped from the

2.   <u>Groups</u>

Group sessions are a major program process in all phases of the program.

■   Groups are designed for up to eight offenders, and are facilitated by two staff (facilitating groups with only one staff should be done only on a temporary basis). Phase I may include more than eight members without seriously weakening the process. Phases II and III should stay strictly within the eight member limit.

■   Groups should meet a minimum of twice a week, and three or even four meetings a week are desirable, especially in Phase II. Less frequent meetings fail to develop the required intensity and momentum.

■   Phase I is a 14-lesson, "closed-end" group process, with all participants in a group beginning and ending the phase together.

■   Phases II and III are open ended groups – i.e., individual participants can enter and leave these phases without disrupting the process of the group.

> The basic activity of group meetings is "Thinking Reports." (Thinking reports are described in Lesson 7 of Phase I).

3.   <u>Journals</u>

Individual journal work is the second major program process.

After Phase I, each offender is given individual journal assignments tailored to their individual patterns and stage of learning. These journals are reviewed individually by staff on a regular schedule.

Individual journal work is the second major program process.

4. Time Frames

The following time periods are recommended for the program:

- ■   Phase I is 14 sessions.

- ■   Phase II is designed to be flexible in time, reflecting different sentence structures of individual offenders. In general, more serious offenders will have longer sentences of incarceration and should be expected to participate for longer periods in Phase II.

- ■   Phase III is 6-12 months.

Beyond the specified minimum requirement, the exact time an individual spends in Phase II should be determined by two variables: (1) their sentence; and (2) their completion of task objectives of Phase II.

Note: The amount of time spent in Phase II should not be determined by purely subjective measures of "progress," as judged by program staff. Instead, each participant should be challenged to complete an objective and operationally-defined set of tasks (specified above, under "Program Phases") within a definite period of time, which is specified in advance.

Minimum standards of performance and maintenance of an open channel of communication require professional staff judgment. But these standards are not completely subjective, nor are they arbitrary. The standards must be operationally defined, must be clear to the offender, and must be realistically achievable within the specified time frame.

5. Rules

Rules of the group and the program should be few, simple, and basic. They include a basic standard of respect between all group members and staff and adherence to the standards of participation as specified above under "Phases of the Program."

The manner in which rules are defined, communicated to the group, and enforced by staff is crucial to the success of the program. (See Section 2 and Section 4)

6. Treatment Team Reviews

Each offender in the program should be reviewed on a regular schedule by the staff team responsible for the program.

A treatment team review consists of a systematic review by staff of the performance of the individual offender and a personal meeting between the offender and the treatment team.

The frequency of treatment team reviews is a function of the overall program time frames. Condensed program delivery will require more frequent treatment team reviews. In no case should treatment team reviews be scheduled less frequently than, at three month intervals.

The objectives of treatment team reviews are:

1) To evaluate individual offenders on their progress and performance;

2) To redefine treatment goals in light of program performance and accomplishments;

3) To identify specific areas of offender behavior and thinking for special attention;

4) To redefine and reinforce program standards and expectations;

5) To convey personal support by staff for the responsible efforts of the offender; and

6) By all of the above, to promote the offender's motivation for cognitive change.

Treatment Team Reviews are further discussed in Section 5.

7. Documentation

The purpose of documentation is to insure continuity, consistency, and quality of treatment for each offender in the program. Minimal documentation includes written records of each offender's group work, including a copy of each thinking report they present in group.

Group records should be available to inform all staff of the nature and quality of group meetings.

Documentation of treatment team reviews must include a summary and evaluation of work accomplished and a statement of new goals and performance expectations. These elements should be documented in an individual Progress Report after each treatment team review.

Termination from the program or from any program phase, for any reason, should be documented in a Termination Progress Report (samples of forms for the above documentation are included in the appendix).

SECTION 2: *Communication & Intervention*

Communication and Intervention:
Basic Principles and Strategies

Effective intervention depends upon effective communication.

A.   Effective Group Process: 5 Principles

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1.   "Depersonalize" the use of staff authority while maintaining control of the process and upholding the rules.

2.   Place authority with the individual offender on questions of how they think and how they should think.

3.   Maintain a clear focus on the basic steps of cognitive self change.

4.   Consciously work to achieve cooperation between group members and staff.

5.   Engage all group members in the group process.

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1.   <u>Depersonalize authority while maintaining control of the process and upholding the rules.</u>

Conflict is inevitable. **"Us vs. them"** is personalized conflict. Staff are as susceptible to personal conflict as offenders. (Though, hopefully, it is not so central to our way of life.) Depersonalized conflict leave open a channel of communication for personal cooperation. Everything depends on how we do it.

> 1. "Depersonalize" the use of staff authority while maintaining control of the process and upholding the rules.

a)   **Controlling the group process:** We need to keep the process on track. We need to be absolutely clear that the process will proceed as we define it—not as a demonstration of our power, but because this is the process that works. It's how the program is defined. And it's what we are being paid to do. We need to convey that our insistence on following the prescribed process is not a personal struggle over "who's in charge," but an unconditional requirement of making the program work i.e., "It's nothing personal."

Offenders will sometimes deliberately create conflict. It helps to recognize (in advance) that this kind of behavior is a predictable part of

the antisocial behavior this program is all about. This kind of conflict is never completely avoidable, and there is no guaranteed way of resolving it. Our best strategy is to depersonalize the conflict, be clear about the conditions for participation, enforce consequences when necessary, and leave the choice to them.

A Strategy for Controlling Disruptive Behavior

1. Recognize the behavior for what it is. (Objective recognition helps in not taking personal offense, Disruptive Behavior is a learned response to authority and limits that many offenders engage in automatically at every opportunity.)

2. Communicate to the offender that the behavior disrupts the task at hand—namely, the process of the program.

3. Communicate with courtesy and respect. Do not convey the intention to dominate their will with your power.

4. Communicate that your duty is to maintain the program process and the conditions of communication that pertain to everyone.

5. Communicate that he or she has the choice whether or not to participate. Let them make it. Respect their choice. Follow through with consequences. Be clear that the meaning of these consequences (for instance, removing a person from the group) is not to punish or personally dominate; it is to preserve the conditions of cooperation and communication within the group.

6. Be as patient as you can afford to be—no more and no less. Disruptive behavior is to be expected. It is intrinsic to offenders' antisocial orientation, and it won't disappear overnight. At the same time, the basic conditions of group communication cannot wait for change to be made. You will need to make clear and deliberate judgments.

The ultimate control of group members' behavior is their removal from the group. In practically every case, this decision should be presented as the offender's choice, not the staff's. The distinction is between coercion ("do as you're told, or else") and cooperation ("these are the conditions of successful participation). This difference is both very subtle (the same words can often be interpreted either way) and all important.

It is often more effective to convey these messages in a personal meeting outside of group.

Note: the management of disruptive behavior is discussed further in Section 4.

b)   **Rules!** Rules are the formal conditions for making the program work. Rules cover attendance, punctuality, homework, respectful manners, etc.

Rules are not tools for asserting our personal domination. They are conditions for working effectively together. Hence, the rules apply to all of us. In this respect there is no difference between "rulers" and "ruled." This theory of rules applies to society generally. If offenders can grasp this concept within the program, they are well on their way to coming to terms with society as a whole. Offenders need to learn to think of rules as vehicles and mechanisms for cooperation, not as external controls.

At the same time it is our responsibility as staff members to communicate and enforce these conditions. We need to do this "impersonally." We need to communicate that, on a personal level, our interest is not in forcing them to comply but in helping them to succeed. Our message should be something like this:

"Failing to keep the rules may result in excluding you from the group. I'll help you prevent that from happening if I can, but I won't change the rules. The rules are the conditions that apply to everybody and without them no one would succeed."

I.e., (once again) "It's nothing personal."

Group Review Questions.

It is a good idea to review and evaluate each group session in light of these criteria:

☒ Did staff maintain group direction and enforce rules without creating a power struggle?

☒ Did staff depersonalize any conflict that occurred?

☒ Were we successful? I.e., did the group member or members involved accept behavioral limits and conditions without personal resentment?

☒ What can we do (or do better) to be more successful in the future?

2. <u>Placing authority with group members</u>.

Group members are the ultimate authority on how they think and how they should think. (Whether we like it or not, the power to think what they like is ultimately beyond anyone's control except themselves.) At the same time, we cannot turn them loose in group to imagine they see patterns of thinking that aren't there, or to waste

> 2. Place authority with the individual offender on questions of how they think and how they should think.

their time chasing dead ends. As with the issues of control discussed above, our role demands art, skill, and judgment.

■ Presenting yourself as the authority about how members think, or about how they should think, is one of the most common pitfalls in teaching cognitive change. It invites resistance and resentment.

■ It does no good to preach. It does no good to present your "expert interpretations." It does no good to tell them what their mistakes are. This is a hard lesson to learn.

■ Our goal is to teach them to see. A condition of seeing is that they use their own eyes.

Sometimes we can describe the patterns we think we see, but then ask them to verify our perception. Ask them to use their own words to describe the pattern they see. (And make note of the words they use—their choice of words is often an important key to their personal way of thinking.) Always, we must convey that they are the ultimate authority. We need to draw out their own recognition of their patterns, not impose our own.

They are also the authority on the question of whether or not they are going to change. That choice, above all others, is theirs alone. From the beginning of Phase I to the end of Phase III we need to convey that we are teaching skills that give them the power to control their own life. We are not attempting to control it for them. We create motivation for making a positive

choice by teaching them to see their patterns realistically, and by providing realistic opportunities for change. But the decision remains theirs to make.

Cognitive self-change is a process of learning to control your own life, not a process of letting others do it for you.

Group Review Questions:

⊠ Did staff communicate that group members are the ultimate authority in identifying their patterns of thinking? How? (Statements, tones of voice, etc.)

⊠ Did staff communicate that group members are responsible for making their own basic choices? How?

⊠ Did group members understand this? Did they believe it?

⊠ How could staff members have better communicated these messages?

3. Focus on the basics of cognitive self-change.

Cognitive self-change is, in its most basic terms, a very simple process: to find and change criminogenic patterns of thinking.

> 3. Maintain a clear focus on the basic steps of cognitive self change.

Once thinking reports are introduced in Phase I, every group should be focused in one way or another on underlying cognitive patterns. E.g., finding patterns in a thinking report, describing them, recognizing different forms of them, exploring their scope and consequences, finding other examples, intervening in them, learning alternatives to them, etc.

It is easy to lose track of these basics. We may get caught up in the complications of interpersonal communication that inevitably occur in group, not to speak of the complications and distractions inherent in the whole correctional context. We may fall into habits of "counseling" or "doing therapy" that have very little to do with the process of cognitive change. Or we may set up so many intermediate steps in the process that we effectively lose sight of the basic, simple steps.

Cognitive change is a transparent and intuitive process. It should always be clear, even obvious, what we are trying to do. Both the effectiveness and the credibility of the process depends on keeping a clear focus. When groups seem unfocused we have probably wandered away from the basic steps of the process. Vaguely understood tools will not work. And offenders will believe in the process only to the extent they understand what they are learning, and see it working.

STEP 1: Find your criminogenic patterns of thinking.

STEP 2: Find ways to change them.

Details of these two basic steps can get pretty complicated, but the basics remain simple.

Step 1 may take weeks of skill building in thinking reports before an offender discovers key patterns. **Step 2** may involve learning both immediate interventions ("though stoppers") and complex new cognitive skills, together with gradually building motivation and determination to apply these interventions and skills. This may take months. But, all along the way the offender is engaged in these two basic steps. There is never any stage of the process where he is doing "something else."

We need to stay conscious that what we are doing is finding and changing criminogenic patterns of thinking. This is what it means to keep the group focused on the basics.

A good rule of thumb is that group members themselves should always be clear in their own minds that this is what they are doing. They should be able to recognize each task, each assignment, and each discovery learned in group as having a clear place in this process.

It requires a deliberate effort to stay focused. The group process review is an effect tool for maintaining this focus.

Group Review Questions:

⊠ Did each of the group activities have a clear relation to the basic steps of cognitive self-change? What were the connections?

⊠ Was the reason for each task or activity clear to each group member? Who was not clear, and why?

⊠ How could this have been more clear?

4. Cooperation.

Cooperation between staff and group members (and among group members themselves) for a mutual, responsible goal represents a fundamental change from the typical antisocial posture: "us vs. them." This is no small achievement. In a sense, it is the ultimate

> 4. Consciously work to achieve cooperation between group members and staff.

goal of all correctional change—i.e., to replace patterns of hostility and social conflict with patterns of social participation based on cooperation. In this simple but important sense the process of the program (cooperation between staff and group members) represents the goal of the program (social cooperation).

All of the guidelines and principles outlined in this document are aimed at achieving cooperation. When cooperation breaks down, look to a breakdown of these principles. They may also point to a solution.

Examples:

Are hostile offender attitudes blocking the channels of communication? Perhaps we should expose these attitudes as disruptive and challenge the members to meet the conditions of participation, using the strategy outlined in Section 1.

Do group members resent our authority? Perhaps we are being too controlling and need to let group members speak more for themselves. And also, perhaps not. We may need to place responsibility for their resentment on them. Or we may need to do both.

Are group members feeling bored? Are they doubting that it is worth their trouble to take part? Perhaps we need to re-focus on the basic tasks and steps of cognitive self-change. Or perhaps we have let the process degenerate into one-on-one therapy with a group of passive spectators.

The goal of cooperation is central and critical to the strategy of self-change. It deserves special attention in our group process reviews. By actively and constantly challenging ourselves to aim for this goal, we can help ourselves to achieve it.

Group Review Questions:

☒ Was there an atmosphere of cooperation? I.e., did it feel like staff and group members were working together for a common goal?

☒ Did staff convey personal attitudes of cooperation, partnership, and respect? Did some statements (gestures, tones of voice, etc.) express contrary attitudes?

☒ Did each offender express an attitude of cooperation, partnership, and respect? Who expressed contrary attitudes?

☒ How could we improve the quality of cooperation?

5. Participation.

Lack of general participation is one of the pitfalls of the program—it is easy to concentrate attention on one individual at the expense of the group. Even though we typically work with one thinking report at a time, every group member should be actively engaged in working with that report. It is our responsibility to help make that happen.

> 5. Engage all group members in the group process.

One key to encouraging participation is for staff to pay attention to everyone in the group. We should develop habits of constant awareness of the whole group. This takes a conscious effort.

If you are actively leading the group, make sure everyone is following what you are doing. Make sure they understand it. Ask them to help you. Make it the group's task, not your own. Teach everyone to be a therapist. (Ultimately, each member must become their own therapist.)

The goal is not participation for participation's sake. We don't want members to go off on their own track—even if they do it together—unless doing so directly promotes the task at hand. If the goal is to identify one group member's pattern of thinking, then each member should be helping to do just that. Using another member's thinking report to identify their own patterns is useful and important (it is one of the strengths of the thinking report process) but a special focus is necessary on the particular thinking report being discussed and the patterns it reveals for that individual.

Group Review Questions:

☒ Was each group member engaged in the process of the group?

☒ Who did not (meaningfully) participate?

☒ What was happening that discouraged—or failed to encourage—each individual's participation?

☒ How could staff create better participation?

B. Motivating Self-Change.

We can't change offenders' thinking. They have to do it themselves.

The group techniques described above are designed to lay a foundation for cooperation, as opposed to resistance and defiance. Success in these group strategies are key to developing motivation for self-change.

> *We can't change offenders' thinking. They have to do it themselves.*

Motivating Self-Change

Step 1: Make them see their thinking for what it is, in all its details and consequences.

Step 2: Show them alternatives they perceive as meaningful and possible.

Step 3: Hold them accountable for their behavior and offer personal support for change.

Step 4: Challenge them to choose.

We can conceive of building motivation for self-change as a gradual process with definite elements and its own internal logic. Each of these elements is either a specific objective or principle of the program.

Step 1: Make them see their thinking for what it is, in all its details and consequences.

Offenders need to see their criminal behavior as an inevitable consequence of their thinking. Our objective in Phase II is to draw this picture with inescapable clarity. They must see that if they do not change key elements of their thinking, their life in the future will continue on exactly the same path as the past. With serious offenders, their thinking sets up a vicious circle, a trap, with inevitable harm to others, trouble with the law, and never-ending cycles of resentment, defiance, retribution, and pain. They need to see this picture with their own eyes. And they need to see their own thinking as a centerpiece of the picture.

This involves a refocus of attention away from the world they see as persecuting them (perhaps with some justification), and on to their own internal attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns. This shift of attention is the fundamental step of cognitive self-change.

We do not try to

This step is the main objective of Phase II. In Phase II offenders must come to see for themselves not only how they think, but that how they think is something they themselves do. And they must also see for themselves the inevitable consequences of their thinking.

prove to them that their thinking is wrong. Only that they do it, and that it has definite consequences.

Step 2: Guide them to discover alternative thinking that they recognize as meaningful and possible.

We want the offenders to accept responsibility for how they think. Recognition that they can think differently than they do is a **key** part of that understanding.

For many offenders this recognition is a revelation. It has never occurred to them to think differently than they do.

Many offenders believe that any way of responding to situations other than their habitual response involves selling out their pride and integrity as a person. (Violent offenders may say things like, "What should I do, lie down and let them run over me?") Our objective is to make such offenders realize, first of all, that this response is itself part of their habit of thinking, and, secondly, that there are other cognitive responses and that they don't entail letting people run over you.

We do not try to prove that these other ways are better, or that the offender should do them. We only demonstrate that alternatives exist, and that these alternatives do not entail loss of integrity or self-pride.

We need to teach cognitive skills and new cognitive coping responses to stressful situations. We need to teach thought-stopping techniques to interrupt old patterns.

We need to present these alternatives as meaningful options, not as unrealistic and unachievable.

We need to present new cognitive skills as part of a complete image of life that includes pro-social goals and values. We do not try to prove that they should pursue these goals and values. We need to demonstrate only that they can.

We are not trying to force their change. We are laying a foundation for them to choose to change. Our message is that they *can* change.

> *We are laying a foundation for them to choose to change.*

Step 3: Hold them accountable for their behavior and offer personal support for change.

It is not particularly hard to hold offenders accountable. Nor is it particularly hard to support them in change. The difficulty lies in doing both at the same time. This ability defines the fundamental art of correctional intervention.

Accountability implies punishment. But the meaning of punishment depends in part on the attitudes of those who impose it. The skills of group process (Part I, above) include "depersonalizing" our use of authority. The attitude that "it's nothing personal" when we impose punitive consequences means that we can, at the same time, be personally supportive of the offender.

Punishment does not require an attitude of personal condemnation.

On the other side of the coin, it is just as important that our personal support for the offender does not mitigate his accountability. Our support does not imply forgiveness or "amnesty" for misbehavior. There is no trade-off between treatment and accountability. They go together.

Because they go together, we help the offender find his way out of the trap of the vicious cycle of defiance and control.

Step 4: Challenge them to choose.

Place the choice to change with the offender as the ultimate leverage in creating motivation to change.

On the one hand, they must recognize that whatever they choose, they are responsible for their choice. Making them face that choice, consciously and deliberately, is critical. (When they feel coerced, offenders automatically feel entitled to defy.)

> *We help the offender find his way out of the trap of control and defiance.*

Change is not knuckling under. It is self-empowerment. Change is not submitting to the crowd, it is setting interpersonal cooperation as your personal goal.

There are many times in the course of treatment when we should explicitly present this choice. In Phase I offenders need to know that we will not attempt to coerce them to change. Throughout Phase II they need to recognize that the unpleasant truths they are learning about themselves can be avoided in the future by choosing to change. In Phase III offenders must train themselves, with our help, to see each high-risk situation as a challenge for them to define the future course of their lives by the response they choose here and now.

These are the meanings we need to convey with our processes.

In the end, we accept the fact that an offender may choose to remain criminal. But now they are challenged to make that choice deliberately, with their eyes open, with conscious responsibility for their choice.

In fact, few if any offenders will choose to be criminal on these terms. When they seem to do so it is almost always due to their ability to obscure some aspect of their responsibility. It is our job to expose and display all these hidden corners of avoidance.

If they choose not to change anyway, we can cope with it. We know not everyone will change. Our response should be, "OK, we said it was your choice and we mean it. We will do what we need to do to control your criminal behavior, of course. That's why we have police and jails. That's our choice. Fair is fair. No hard feelings."

Realistically, we can't do more. If do this well, it is quite a lot.

SECTION 3: *Program Content*

Content of the Program

This section is laid out in three parts corresponding to the three phases of the program.

Phase I is presented as a set of 14 lesson plans. Each lesson plan corresponds to one group session, but some of the lessons can be extended over several sessions, thereby extending any two lessons over two sessions.

> *Phase I is presented as a series of 14 lesson plans.*

Phase II is an open ended-process of exploring individual thinking patterns, developing interventions in these patterns, and constructing a long range plan for change. The format of this section is more open than the section on Phase I. The content here is presented as four modules, each one of which can and should extend over a number of group sessions. The modules are not separate and sequential, but are cumulative. Targeting Patterns for Change (Module 1) defines the basic goal of Phase II. Journals (Module 2) are first introduced in Phase I, are developed further in Phase II, and continue to be used to the end of Phase III. Interventions for Change (Module 3) are introduced gradually throughout Phase II. A Plan for Change (Module 4) is the final task of Phase II. It utilizes the results of Modules 1, 2, and 3 to construct a systematic plan for changing old patterns of thinking and practicing new patterns of thinking.

Phase III is the process of applying the Plan for Change. The focus of Phase III is "self-risk management," based on principles of relapse prevention. The format of this section is even more open than the previous section. We describe the process, methods, and goals of Phase III in broad terms. Within these guidelines, it is left to the staff facilitator to define the content of individual group sessions.

A.   Phase I—Orientation

Phase I is presented as a series of 16 lessons over either weeks. Each lesson should be between 1 and 1.5 hours in length.

This section includes 14 lesson plans. It is suggested that Lesson 8 (Thinking Reports) and Lesson 13 (Interventions for Change) be extended for extra sessions. Another option is to extend the review process (Lesson 14).

Even though Phase I is presented in a "classroom" format; the principles of group process described in Section Two should be followed. The lessons should be engaging and interesting. Every offender should be actively involved in every class.

The conceptual and informational content of each lesson is presented in bold type.

> *Guidelines and information for staff are presented in italics and indented.*

Each lesson begins with a statement of objectives for that lesson. Then the content and guidelines of that lesson are presented. Finally, we suggest questions and projects for homework.

Information to be displayed on an overhead or flip chart is presented in bold type and enclosed in a box.

Lesson 1: Introduction

> **Objectives:**
>
> 1. Inform participants of the basic structure, goals, and expectations of the program.
>
> 2. Define a concept of rules that is based on cooperation, not on power and domination.
>
> 3. Lay a foundation of cooperation between staff and participants.

Content:

> *Review the discussion on Depersonalizing Authority in Section 2. Rules are not a matter of my power against theirs, but the necessary requirements for cooperative work. This concept and attitude are essential to achieving cooperation and effective group process.*

Say in Your Own Words:

1.   Group schedule and time frames of the program.

> *Define and explain the group schedule for Phase I.*

2.   Requirements of attendance and participation.

> *Define and explain these basic conditions of participation.*

3.   The concepts of "self-change" and "open channel of communication."

> *Be sure these concepts are clear in your own mind. Then explain them in your own words. The following is a suggestion.*

The basic idea behind the program is that by controlling the thoughts in our minds, we can exercise control over our behaviors, reactions, and relationships with other people. We will explain this basic idea more completely in the lesions that follow.

It is not the aim of this program to make you change. We respect the fact that you have control over how you think and how you act. What we will do is teach a set of skills that

you can use to change things about your life, if you choose to apply them. These tools focus on the thoughts that go on inside our minds.

We will need to know what these thoughts are. And the only way we can know your thoughts is if you tell us.

The success of this program requires an "Open channel of communication." This means that each of you must be willing to share your thoughts about specific situations in an open and uncensored way. On staff's part, our role is not to find reasons to get you into more trouble, but to help you identify what parts of your thinking you can control in order to effectively control your life. We won't judge or condemn or punish you for the way you think. You won't be held back in the program because we don't approve of the thoughts you report in group.

What we do demand is that you report your thoughts openly and honestly, and make an honest effort to examine them objectively.

4.   **The limits and conditions of confidentiality.**

Review the specific policies on confidentiality that apply to the program.

Don't promise to keep secrets about anything the agency legitimately needs to know, but provide assurance that treatment details will not be used inappropriately or out of context.

E.g., individual thinking reports should not be shared with other staff (or anyone else) indiscriminately, and should not become part of the general correctional record (unless there are specific policies protecting against the use of such reports in adversarial proceeding.) Summary progress reports should be part of the offender's permanent record. Information about specific crimes or planned crimes may be shared with appropriate authorities. On the other hand, this is a cognitive program that neither requires nor asks for such information. We need an open channel of communication about each participant's thinking. We don't need detailed physical information that constitutes legal evidence.

5.   **The criteria and standards for completion of the program.**

Completion must be based on clear, achievable criteria. Do not give the impression that "progress" and "program completion" are subjective judgments totally in the control of staff. Instead, the tasks and criteria of completion are objective and achievable.

Phase I of this program is a series of 16 lessons. You will asked to participate in class and to complete some homework assignments.

In Phase II you will be asked to take a long, careful look at the ways you think, and at how your thinking has led you to do things that have gotten you into trouble in the past. You will also learn some skills for controlling these ways of thinking. Finally, you will be asked to design a long-term plan for controlling the thinking that is most likely to get you into trouble in the future.

In Phase III you will be asked to put this plan into practice in real life.

At the end of the program you will have a good understanding of your own attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns set of skills, and will have new skills for controlling your life by controlling these attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns.

The choice of whether or not continue to use these skills will be up to you. The goal of the program is to give you that choice, not to make it for you.

> *It is recommended that you distribute a handout defining the completion requirements for Phase I. Similar handouts should be distributed at the beginning of Phase II and Phase III. A sample handout is included at the end of this lesson.*

6.   Homework

Option 1:   Describe some of the reasons that cooperation with staff is difficult in the correctional environment. Identify some steps that can be taken to improve and support cooperation between offenders and staff.

Option 2: Define cooperation in your own words. List some benefits of having a cooperative relationship with someone.

Handout

Phase I Requirements:

TASKS

1.   Learn the basic principles of Cognitive Self Change:

      a.   What we do in our minds controls what we do in our lives.
      b.   We can control the course of our lives by controlling what we do in our minds.

2.   Learn how to do Thinking Reports and how to keep a personal journal of your thoughts and attitudes.

3.   Identify one key pattern of thinking that has led you to violent or criminal behavior in the past.

4.   Identify one realistic alternative or intervention in this pattern of thinking.

PARTICIPATION

1.   Attendance, punctuality, and completion of assignments.

2.   Keep an open channel of communication. This means:

      a.   Help yourself and others to complete the tasks of Phase II by maintaining a business like approach to group work.
      b.   Present real, honest, and meaningful thinking reports.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

Phase I is 16 sessions over an 8-week period of time.

Completion of Phase I is not automatic by attending all group sessions. The task and participation requirements must also be met. People who fail to meet minimum expectations of task completion and participation will be dropped from the program.

Lesson 2: The Idea of Cognitive Self Change

Objectives:

1.   Define attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns.

2.   Explain and illustrate how attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns control our actions, responses, and relationships with other people.

Content:

>   *Display the following on a flip chart:*

> What we do in our minds controls the course of our lives.

Say in Your Own Words:

This is the central idea of the program.

Let me give some examples.

When I am ordered by my boss to do something I don't want to do, I am likely to feel angry and to think angry thoughts.

These thoughts and feelings are what I am doing in my mind in this particular situation.

If my thoughts and feelings are <u>very</u> angry I may get so carried away that I explode, tell the boss off, and quit my job.

This is one way that "what goes on in my mind" might control what I do and what happens in my life.

But I might also have other kinds of thoughts and feelings in my mind.

Even though I don't want to do what the boss tells me to do, and even if I feel angry about it, I might think, "Well, he's the boss. I can't afford to lose this job, so I better do what he says." If I have thoughts like these I am more likely to control my anger, and at least not quit my job without first finding another one.

This is another way in which "what goes on in my mind" controls what I do and what happens in my life.

The idea is that by controlling what I think I can have some control (not absolute control) over how I feel and how I act. And this gives me control over what happens in my life—like keeping my job—and over my relationships with other people—like my boss.

There are lots of examples of how our thinking affects what we do, what happens to us, and our relationship with people.

> *Present a variety of examples. Consider sports stars who train themselves to have positive mental images of their successful performance. Consider attitudes toward co-workers on a job. Consider thoughts and feelings toward someone you love (like a child or parent or lover) as opposed to thoughts and feelings toward someone you don't like or don't trust.*
>
> *Ask participants for their own examples.*
>
> *Discuss the examples until the general point is clear.*

In this program we will concentrate on the attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns that we perform inside our minds. The goal will be to identify those attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns that are most responsible for the trouble we get into. Then we will learn and practice ways of controlling these attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns as a way of staying out of trouble.

First, we need to understand what we mean by attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns.
> *Write these words on a flip chart. Give a brief explanation and an example of each term.*

Attitudes

Beliefs

Thinking Patterns

Attitudes are our basic thoughts and feelings toward something or someone in our life. For example, if I like school and do well at it, I will probably have a positive attitude toward school. I have good thoughts and feelings toward school. If I can't stand it to have anyone tell me what to do, I will probably have negative thoughts and feelings toward people in authority. I have a "bad attitude" toward authority.

> *Ask participants to give examples of attitudes that they see in other people. Ask for examples of attitudes they recognize in themselves.*

Beliefs are ideas or principles or values that we use to evaluate ourselves and other people.

For example, I might believe that people should be tolerant and respectful of each other. This is an example of a moral belief.
I might believe that some kinds of people should be tolerant and respectful of each other. This is an example of a moral belief.

> *Ask what kinds of groups are sometimes believed by some people not to deserve tolerance and respect. Remember to practice objectivity. Our purpose is not to enter into moral debate of right and wrong.*

Both of these kinds of beliefs are likely to affect how we act and how we relate to others.

> *Ask for examples and explanations from the class.*

Not all beliefs are necessarily moral beliefs. I might believe that in order to keep people from taking advantage of me, I have to be threatening and intimidating toward other people. I might believe that all people are basically selfish and dishonest and only obey the law because they are afraid of getting caught. Or I might believe that some people (even most people) are basically honest and naturally want to cooperate with others and obey the laws.

The way I act toward other people is controlled in part by the beliefs I hold.

> *Ask the class for examples of how different beliefs result in different kinds of behaviors.*

> *Remember to practice objectivity. We are laying a foundation for objective examination of attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns.*

Thinking patterns are the thoughts that I think automatically in different kinds of situations.

For instance, when I am insulted by someone, I may automatically think insulting thoughts toward that person in my mind (even if I don't express them). This is a very common kind of thinking pattern.

Give other examples of automatic thinking patterns.

Then ask the class for their own examples.

Do you see how our attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns can control how we act in different situations?

Be sure this is clear. Ask specific group members for examples. Be sure the basic idea is clear to everyone.

Do you see how learning to control our attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns could give us more control over what we do in different situations?

This is a more subtle idea, and participants may not be ready to appreciate that we really can control our attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns. Ask them to stay open minded and suspend judgment for now. They should grasp the key idea that if we can control what goes on in our minds, we have powerful leverage for controlling what goes on in our life.

We will learn some systematic and straightforward ways of controlling our attitudes, beliefs and thinking patterns.

Part of this will be fairly easy. But part of it will be not easy at all. We will discover that some of the attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns that we need to control in order to stay out of trouble are ones that we are not comfortable changing. Our sense of pride may be tied to these attitudes, beliefs and thinking patterns. This makes self-change more of a struggle. But it is not impossible. If we proceed slowly and carefully, we will see that we can change our basic attitudes, beliefs and thinking patterns and still feel self-pride and satisfaction with our life. Only our pride and satisfaction will need to be based on new attitudes, new beliefs, and new thinking patterns.

This is a long and difficult process. It would not be worth doing if the consequences of failing to do it were not so important.

This is a question each of you will need to decide for yourself.

Homework:

Option 1: Give examples of one of your own attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns.

Option 2: Describe a situation in your own life that was important to you. Identify some of the attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns that were in your mind in that situation.

Lesson 3: Different Points of View

Objectives:

1.   Have participants recognize that everyone experiences the world differently, and that differences of point of view do not always mean that someone is wrong.

2.   Have participants recognize that sometimes people feel absolutely certain they are right about something when they are not.

3.   Have participants recognize that sometimes two different points of view or opinions about something can each be partly right.

4.   Present the idea that it is sometimes important to be able to be open minded about things we feel sure about.

Content:

Say in Your Own Words:

People often have different perceptions of the same situation or event.

> *Select a photograph of a reasonably complex situation or event that includes several people. Show the photograph to the class. Then ask each participant to write down what they think is happening.*

> *Then ask each participant in turn to describe what they think is happening. Encourage different perceptions. Make the point that people see things differently.*

Sometimes people with different perceptions or opinions can each be partly right.

> *Give examples of people disagreeing when they both are partly right. First, give an example involving yourself. Then ask for examples from the group.*

Sometimes people can feel absolutely certain they are right about something, when it turns out they were wrong.

Have you ever had that happen to you? Has it happened to someone you know?

Discuss examples.

Examining our own attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns demands that we be able to be objective and suspend judgment about them. This ability to suspend judgment and be objective is one of the most important skills to practice in the program.

Discuss why it might be important to suspend judgment about our attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns. The key idea is that, by being objective about them, we leave ourselves open to the need to change. If we insist on holding to the belief we are right, we prevent ourselves from even considering change.

Encourage discussion of these ideas and examples for the remainder of the session.

Homework:

Option 1: Describe one situation in which you were sure you were right but turned out to be wrong.

Option 2: Describe one situation in which someone you know was sure they were right but turned out to be wrong.

Option 3: Identify a topic you have a strong opinion about. Then state an opposite or opposing opinion as clearly and objectively as you can.

Lesson 4: Attitudes, Beliefs, and Thinking patterns that get Us in Trouble

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Objectives:

1.   Introduce the idea that specific attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns lie behind the behaviors that get us in trouble.

2.   Get participants to begin to identify these attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns in themselves.

3.   Establish an objective, non-judgmental atmosphere surrounding discussion of these personal cognitive patterns.

Content:

> *Give an example from your own life of an attitude, belief, or thinking pattern that has gotten you in trouble in the past. For example:*

Say in Your Own Words:

When I was younger I was convinced that a certain person hated me and would do anything he could to hurt me.

This was my belief.

Belief

I had the attitude that this person was disgusting and not worthy of respect.

> *Add the word "attitude" to the flip chart.*

Whenever I saw this person I would think thoughts like, "Look at that S.O.B. Who does he think he is anyway? He's always pushing people around. Some day he'll get what he deserves."

> *Add the words "thinking patterns" to the flip chart.*

One day this person bumped up against me in the hallway at school. I lost my temper and hit him. I was called into the principal's office and suspended from school for starting a fight.

The person I hit claimed he bumped me by accident.

Did my attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns contribute to my getting into trouble?

> *Encourage discussion and participation from everyone in the class.*

Were my attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns true?

> *Encourage different answers and opinions. Encourage the conclusion that the class doesn't have all the information to be able to tell.*

Can you see how my attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns contributed to my fighting (and getting in trouble) <u>whether or not</u> they were true?

> *This is a major point. Take time explaining it and discussing examples.*

When the way we think gets us into trouble, it seldom makes any real difference whether we are right or wrong—as far as getting into trouble is concerned. Holding to certain thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes is what causes the trouble. Sometimes we are so devoted to proving that our thinking is right that we dig ourselves deeper and deeper into ways of acting that get us in trouble.

What are some ways of thinking that get people into trouble?
Do people locked up in jail learn ways of thinking that get them into trouble?

> *Most incarcerated offenders are able to recognize that hostility and contempt for officers puts prisoners at risk of doing things that get them even more deeply into trouble. This understanding can form a good foundation for this program.*

What are the attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns that staff have toward prisoners?

> *Treat whatever descriptions are offered objectively. Don't debate right and wrong. It is not important to agree whether staff do or don't all think alike about prisoners. The point is to get some examples of staff thinking, as perceived by the group members.*

What are some of the attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns that inmates have toward staff?

How are these ways of thinking likely to affect the behavior of these two groups toward each other?

What are the particular ways of thinking inmates have that are likely to get them into trouble while that are incarcerated?

Are these ways of thinking likely to get them into trouble after they are released?

> *Make an effort to keep this discussion objective. Offer the opinion that some of the ways of thinking learned in prison contribute to getting into more trouble. But don't push your beliefs and conclusions on the group. If they don't see it the way you do, let it go.*
>
> *The more important point is to get the group thinking about these questions, and to establish a non-judgmental, objective atmosphere for discussion.*

Sometimes the attitudes between staff and inmates in an institution get to be a vicious circle.

A goal of this program is to break out of that vicious circle.

> *The point is to show the participants how to break out of the vicious circle by controlling their attitudes and thinking. You are not offering a "deal" in which staff promise to change if inmates do. (This would quickly turn into a license for inmates to revert to old attitudes, as soon as staff were perceived as reneging on the deal.) Program staff must work to create cooperation and must themselves be open to that cooperation. But we are not promising that the conditions of incarceration are going to change.*

Homework:

Option 1: List several attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns and describe an affect they have on his behavior.

Option 2: Identify one belief you have about life or people. How would you act differently if you didn't hold to that belief?

Lesson 5: Thinking Errors I

Objectives:

1.   Explain the concept of cognitive distortion.

2.   Engage the group in a non-defensive discussion of cognitive distortion.

3.   Lead group members to begin to identify cognitive distortions in their own thinking.

Content:

Write the following on a flip chart:

Misunderstanding

Misinterpretation

Say in Your Own Words:

Everyone in the world has distorted thinking—to some degree, some of the time.

Our ability to understand and interpret the meaning of situations helps us get through life. We use our minds to cope with situations in life.

But these same abilities can be misused to create misunderstanding and misinterpretations of situations.

Has anyone here ever misunderstood or misinterpreted a situation?

Let me tell you about one of my examples.

Describe a situation in which you misinterpreted a situation by thinking someone was attacking or criticizing you when they really weren't. Give more examples if necessary until some of the group are able to identify with this kind of experience. It doesn't matter what kind of misinterpretation is involved. The goal is for the group to see this kind of "cognitive mistake" as something familiar, normal, and non-threatening they can admit and talk about, while they also recognize that such mistakes can have serious consequences.

Ask for examples from the class. Be supportive of their disclosures.

Distortions are misinterpretations or misunderstandings that we do automatically, as a matter of habit.

A distortion is a way of thinking or a way of seeing situations that is so automatic that we think and see they way even when the facts don't completely support it.

Distortions

Ways of:	♦ THINKING
And:	♦ SEEING
That are:	♦ AUTOMATIC
And are:	♦ NOT SUPPORTED BY THE FACTS

Explain each part of this definition in turn.

Ways of thinking are the thoughts and attitudes about situations. Ways of seeing are the meanings and interpretations we give to situations that are so automatic that we literally don't realize we are doing any thinking at all. Give examples. You can use the thinking errors list, or you can give other kinds of examples.

Ask the participants for examples of possible distortions. Be supportive of their efforts. We need to nurture an objective, non-judgmental perspective. This is the foundation of the self-examination the program is based on.

There are some distortions that are particularly likely to get us into trouble with the law. These are labeled "thinking errors." These particular distortions were identified by offenders themselves, several years ago in a program similar to this one.

Almost everyone can identify with some of these distortions. Many of us can probably recognize that some of these are things we do quite a lot. Some of them may have had important consequences in our lives.

> *Select a thinking error from the list. Read the definition, and check to see that it is understood.*

Can you think of examples of this distortion in your own thinking?

> *Consider giving an example of your own, but don't picture yourself as criminal. Give examples from other offenders.*

Can you picture in your mind how practicing this "thinking error" could get a person into trouble with the law?

> *Discuss a series of thinking errors until the idea is clear and until they are able to approach the subject without too much defensiveness.*

> *Pass out the "thinking errors" sheet.*

I want to ask you to read this list of thinking errors and decide for yourself whether or not they pertain to you. Some of them may fit you a lot. Others may not fit at all. You decide.

Give each item a score from 1 to 5. 1 means the error doesn't fit you at all. 5 means it fits you a lot. You will be the only judge. Take the time to think about each item. Think of examples. Then give your score. We'll talk about them next meeting.

Homework:

Rate yourselves from 1 to 5 on each of the 36 thinking errors on the handout.

Lesson 6: Thinking Errors II

Objectives:

1.   Teach a process of objective self-assessment based on the designated "thinking errors."

2.   Develop clear understanding of the content and meaning of the errors.

3.   Have each participant identify the errors that most apply to them, and understand some of the destructive consequences for himself and others.

Content:

> **Say in Your Own Words:**

Let's review the assignments from the last group.

> *Ask each participant to describe one of the thinking errors on the handout and report how he evaluated its application to himself. Ask for brief explanations of their reasoning. Your objective here is to develop critical reflection, but not to be judgmental or intimidating. Give lots of positive feedback. It doesn't matter much at this point that they are missing important points about their own thinking. They are starting the process of self-examination. Make non-threatening suggestions about how they could be even more critical in their self-assessment, but keeps a positive, supportive tone.*

> *Then select the most popular thinking errors and discuss each of them as a group. (Be sure to include victim stance and "loner.") Ask for as many examples of these errors as they can think of.*

> *Ask them to define or describe each of these thinking errors in their own words.*

> *Write the group's consensus definitions on a flip chart.*

> Promote an active discussion of the key errors they identify. Explore their personal ways of performing them. Get as many examples as you can.

> Ask them to define or describe each of these thinking errors in their own words. Write the group's consensus definitions on a flip chart.

Promote an active discussion of the key errors they identify. Explore their personal ways of performing them. Get as many examples as you can. Get them to see similarities and differences in the ways they experience different thinking errors.

The objective of this discussion is 1) to understand the breath of meaning of these key errors, 2) to come to a consensus definition of these errors.

Homework:

Option 1: Pick the 3 thinking errors that you use most often. Describe one situation in which you have used each error, and describe how you used it.

Option 2: Keep track of all the thinking errors you see other people do between now and the next group. Make a short note for each example (a few words.)

Lesson 7: Thinking Reports I

Objectives:

    1.   Teach the basic technique of thinking report.

    2.   Teach the rationale of doing thinking reports.

Content:

Staff should review the section on thinking reports in Section 3-A of this Manual.

Say in Your Own Words:

The first step in cognitive change is learning to observe our own thinking. We need to practice paying attention to our thoughts.

Thinking reports are a skill that helps us do that.

Thinking reports are just what they sound like: a report of the thoughts that go on inside our mind.

Write the following on a flip chart.

THINKING REPORTS

1. A brief, objective description of the situation.

2. A list of all the thoughts you can remember having at the time.
    - ●without explanation
    - ●without justification
    - ●without censorship
    - ●without criticism

3. A list of the feelings you had.

4. Your attitudes and beliefs having to do with the situation.

We will use thinking reports in group. But the most important use of thinking reports is for each person to practice observing their own thinking.

It is not easy to be completely about observing and reporting what goes on inside our minds. It takes effort and practice.

Let me give an example.

Give a thinking report of your own.

First describe a situation along with your thoughts and feelings, without writing anything down. Then go back and write it all down in the form of a thinking report.

When I was driving to work one day, I was stopped by a copy for speeding. I saw the flashing lights and thought, "Oh damn, how can I get out of this?" I decided to be as nice as I could and try to get by with a warning. I tired to think of an excuse that he would accept. I was real polite when the officer came to the car. So was he. But he gave me a ticket anyway. Then I felt kind of dumb for trying so hard to get away with it.

Let's put this down as a thinking report:

Go through the steps of the thinking report, pointing out that you are following the outline on the flip chart.

Situation: I was stopped on the way to work for speeding.

Point out that this part of the report is short and objective. Any feelings or thoughts I might have about it go below.

Note: the ability to objectively describe situations that we have strong feelings about is a critical skill in the process of cognitive change. Offenders can learn this skill by doing thinking reports. They are not told that their thoughts and feelings in situations don't count or aren't important. On the contrary, they are the most important part of a thinking report. Only they are not to be included in the description of the situation. This is an effective way of learning to distinguish fact from opinion—a basic cognitive skill required for prosocial problem solving.

THOUGHTS:

1. Oh damn.

2. How can I get out of this?

3. Maybe he'll just give me a warning.

4. If he sees that I'm a responsible person he won't want to give me a ticket.

5. I'll tell him I was in a special hurry to get to work. It was pretty important.

6. It didn't work.

7. I feel pretty stupid.

FEELINGS: scared, then kind of embarrassed.

ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS: I don't like getting into trouble. I'm a responsible person who doesn't deserve to be in trouble.

Make the point that you are writing down the thoughts and feelings just as they happened. You are not judging or criticizing them. This is the foundation of the process. It is critical for getting offenders to feel comfortable about doing their own reports. Ask if the idea is clear to everyone. Given another example if you think it is necessary.

Then ask for thinking reports from the group.

Start with very short reports. E.G., what were your thoughts when I first said I was stopped by a cop for speeding? Point out that reporting the thoughts is exactly what we're after. We're not interested at all (at this point in the process) in whether they are right or wrong, or whether we should or shouldn't be thinking them.

Start by getting brief reports of thoughts. Then ask for any feelings they remember. After that state of the report seems clear in their minds, ask for any attitudes or beliefs involved.

The very first reports don't need to be written down. Have everyone in the room practice reporting their thoughts. Use unthreatening situations.

Get the whole group involved in helping each participant separate their thoughts and feelings from the objective description of the situation. And encourage everyone to report their thoughts and feelings in an objective way—no matter how strong (angry, etc.) these thoughts and feelings may be. The point is to report them, not to relive them.

Use your imagination. Make it interesting and fun. Praise their successes.

Practice until everyone understands and is able to give a thinking report.

Homework:

Option 1: Pick a situation in which you got angry. Write a thinking report on the situation.

Option 2: Pick a situation from your past in which you did something to get in trouble. Write a thinking report.

Lesson 8: Thinking Reports II

Objectives:

1. Teach the use of thinking reports to identify target thinking patterns.

2. Have participants identify some of the thinking that lies behind their antisocial or criminal behavior.

Content:

Say in Your Own Words:

We are going to use thinking reports to identify our thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs that are most directly connected to our illegal behavior.

Everyone will need to do this for themselves, because not everyone has exactly the same thinking or engages in the same kind of illegal behavior.

Our point is not to condemn people. (Plenty of that has gone on already. That is how you got here.) Our point is to discover how our thinking contributed to the behavior that got us in trouble.

As a way of starting, let's try to remember when we first got in trouble with the law.

Can you remember what you did?

Can you remember how you were feeling about what you did?

Can you remember what you were thinking?

> *Some members may respond to these questions with some clear recollections. Others may not.*
>
> *Pick a volunteer to report their thoughts and feelings. Encourage them to present a narrative of their memories, without at first putting it into the strict form of a thinking report. Praise their ability to remember and report their thoughts and feelings.*
>
> *When they finish, go back and, with their help, put their report into the form of a thinking report.*

You are demonstrating to the group your own determination to be objective about how you receive their reports. And you are teaching them that same objective perspective. <u>Again, this is the foundation of the cognitive change process.</u>

Ask the group if they see parts of the person's thinking that led them to do what they did. If you see such patterns but the group doesn't, point out what you see. But don't push the point if they don't see it (or don't want to admit seeing it). At this point it is more important to be suggestive (getting them to raise the question in their own mind), rather than definitive (identifying the exact thinking pattern behind their criminal behavior).

Ask each participant to report on one situation in which they did something illegal or against the rules. Ask them if they can see how their thinking promoted their behavior.

An alternative procedure: ask each participant to do a thinking report on a situation in which they got angry (rather than "got in trouble).

Homework:

Option 1: Pick a behavior that has gotten you into trouble several times in your life. Write thinking reports on three separate situations in which you engaged in their behavior.

Option 2: For the next week, pick one situation each day that causes you some degree of stress (frustration, irritation, anger). Write thinking reports.

Lesson 9: Journals I

Convey the idea of journals as a tool for "tuning" one's thinking.

Introduce individual journal projects for each participant.

Content:

Say in Your Own Words:

This whole program is based on paying attention to our thinking, and learning to direct and control it. Thinking reports are a major tool for doing that.

But we also need a tool that we can direct at all the individual details of our own personal habits of thinking.

This is what journals do. Journals are tools for directing our attention to the individual areas of our lives to which we most need to pay attention.

If our thinking is like the engine of a car, then journals are like the "engine computer" the mechanic uses to focus on the smallest patterns and distortions that throw the engine out of whack.

We use journals to look under the hood. Journals help us examine the problem parts and evaluate their performance. We use journals to assess possible solutions and try them out.

If we never open the hood, we just stand back and scratch our head and feel frustrated.

Pass out journal notebooks.

Journals are written notes you write in these notebooks. Journals are not diaries of "what happened today." They are a focused and organized process of studying some specific part of your thinking.

Journals

- **Focused, Organized**

- **Specific area of your thinking**

We use journals to answer individual questions about our thinking. For example, one question might be, how often do I have "victim stance" thinking toward officers in this institution. I may think I have a pretty good idea about the answer to start with. But I could use a journal to keep track of each and every example of feeling victimized by an officer for, say, a day or a week.

I could also use a journal to review examples of my behavior and my thinking from times in the past. I might need to take a close look at how I have reacted to authority in the past, for instance. I could use a journal to describe examples from my childhood of being made to do things I did not want to do by my parents.

Journals are always used with a specific target and a specific goal.

> *Point out that this example illustrated how journals are <u>focused</u> and <u>organized</u> examinations of our thinking. Point out that this project is directed toward a <u>specific area</u> of my thinking. These are the qualities that keep journals from being mere diaries. It is these qualities that make journals effective tools for "getting under the hood" of the ways we think.*
>
> *Give other examples of journal projects, until the group grasps the essential idea and sees how journals can be useful.*

We use journals to do all of the following things:

Journal Projects

1. Keep track of situations and behaviors.

2. Record Thoughts and feelings.

3. Find patterns in my thinking.

4. Find cycles of thinking and behavior.

5. Practice changing and controlling these cycles.

In a way, these five things define the whole program. For now we are just going to practice the first stages of using journals. Our goal for now is to get familiar with the process. Later in Phase II we will use journals to begin serious self-change.

What are some of the things you could use a journal for right now?

Refer back to the previous lessons. You want each participant to begin a modest journal assignment. You will follow through the steps of the journal process over the next few weeks of Phase I.

From this point on, and continuing to the end of Phase III, each participant should keep a journal. A staff person must be assigned responsibility for reviewing each participants' journal, and for guiding the participant in using their journal to focus down on key areas of thinking, as identified in group or by the Treatment Team. For now (Phase I) the emphasis is on the process.

Ask each participant to make their own suggestions. You have the final decision as to their journal assignment. Be sure it is a concrete task that is easily understood and easily accomplished. You can and will revise the content of each participants' journal assignment as we move through the rest of Phase I and the remainder of the program.

Pick non-threatening behaviors for Steps 1 and 2. Examples could be smoking, scratching his head, drinking coffee, eating snacks, using profanity, or any other behavior he engages in fairly often. Encourage them to use antisocial behaviors, but only if they can be objective and undefensive about it.

Homework:

Option 1: Select a target behavior. Then record every example of 1) doing the behavior, 2) thinking about doing the behavior, between now and the next group meeting.

Option 2: Select a target thinking pattern that may not always be expressed in a physical behavior. Keep a record of each time this target thinking pattern occurs in your mind, and describe the situation in which it happened, between now and the next group meeting.

Lesson 10: Journals II

Objectives:

1. Help each participant design a journal project focusing on one of their own antisocial (illegal) behaviors and the thinking that supports it.

2. Help each participant recognize journal projects as helpful and supportive tools for their management of their own lives (not as threatening or as an external control.

Content:

Review the journal assignments from the previous class. Note: this will take most of this group session.

Focus on the mechanics of journal work: methodically recording the targeted events. But the objective here is also to engage the participants in the process of self-examination that journals accomplish. It should be fun. It is about themselves. Give lots of positive feedback.

Say in Your Own Words:

Now we are going to use journal projects to focus down on some of the behaviors and thinking patterns that get us into trouble. We will be using journals as "personal microscopes" to examine the key patterns behind these behaviors.

We have started the process of identifying thinking patterns that support our target behaviors. Now we are going to use journal projects to fine tune that process.

Refer to the chart of 5 steps of Journal Projects.

Journal Projects

1. Keep track of situations and behaviors.

2. Record Thoughts and feelings.

3. Find patterns in my thinking.

4. Find cycles of thinking and behavior.

5. Practice changing and controlling these cycles.

We are going to start Step 1.

Ask each participant to think about one criminal, illegal, or antisocial behavior that they have done several times in the past and that they know they need to avoid in the future. Ask each participant to think of three examples of that behavior. Ask them to remember the first time they did that behavior (as well as they can remember). Ask them to remember the most recent time they did that behavior.

Then discuss their examples in class.

Ask each participant to define in their own words what their target behavior (or behaviors) is. If they say just one work, like stealing, ask them to define what that means. Ask them if there are little examples of this behavior as well as big examples. Are there other behaviors that are like their target behavior? The objective here is to get participants to begin thinking critically about what counts as an example of their target behavior. It is not a simple matter of getting caught breaking the law, for instance. For every illegal behavior, there are versions of that behavior that are not technically violations of the law.

The first step of a journal project is to identify examples and situations surrounding a target behavior. We have begun that part of the process. Now you need to continue it.

Give them their new journal assignments. Each participant should identify as many examples of their target behavior as they can remember. They should include examples from as far in the past as they can remember. They should include the most

serious examples. They should include examples that no one but themselves ever knew about. They should include examples in which nothing much serious happened.

The journal entries should include a brief description of the situation, and what they did in that situation (the targeted behavior).

That's all.

(The next step in this journal assignment will be to report their thoughts and feelings during these situations. Participants will meet with their assigned staff person to review their journal work, and develop their project through the 5 steps of journals. You should plan on using some time in the future Phase I classes to review the stages of their projects and answer questions.)

Homework:

Do the assignment described above. You will continue through the other steps of journal projects during the rest of Phase I.

Lesson 11: The Change Process

> **Objectives:**
>
> 1. Present the change process as a set of connected steps. Have participants understand the logic of that process.
>
> 2. Have participants understand and appreciate the significance of the role of individual determination and deliberate choice in the process of cognitive change.

Content:

Say in Your Own Words:

Let's review the basic principles of cognitive change.

1. **Our thoughts (beliefs, attitudes) control the way we live.**

This is a review. Ask for discussion, agreement, disagreement.

2. **We can control and change the way we live by controlling our thinking.**

This is the other side of the same coin. It is essential that this be understood at this point.

These are the basic principles of cognitive change. Now I want to present the details of how we can make it happen.

Write the following on a flip chart.

COGNITIVE CHANGE

A.   Identify target behaviors.

B.   Identify the thinking behind these behaviors.

C.   Set new goals:
          How do you want to be?
          (acting and thinking)

D.   Identify interventions and controls

E.   Make a plan for change: to stop old thinking,

Review each of the steps in turn. Note that some of the steps have already been learned. Others are new.

A.   What about target behaviors?

Do you know exactly what behaviors you have done in the past you want to target for change?

Remember, this is a process of self-change. The only behaviors you actually will change in the long run are the ones you target for yourself, not the one's that authorities or the law target for you.

Ask each participant to identify their own targets for change. If someone resists targeting their specifically antisocial behaviors, ask them to proceed with the process anyway. They may not choose to change these behaviors in the long run, but for now it is important that they learn how to change them.

B.   Identify the thinking behind the behavior.

We have done a lot of this work already. Each of you has some understanding of the kind of thinking that is behind some of your target behaviors.

Remind the class that this has come from the projects of learning thinking reports and personal journals.

Ask each participant to describe what they have learned about the thinking that is behind their own target behaviors.

C.   **Set new goals.**

This is a new step. We need to stop and think about what change means to us. If we are going to be different from the way we were, how are we going to be?

This is a crucial step in the process of change. We need to aim for goals we really want to achieve. We need to be as clear as we can get about what these goals are.

Think about your old ways of reacting to situations and your old ways of thinking. Think of ways that you have gotten into trouble.

Now think about how you could be different. Maybe you can't think of being different in any way you are comfortable with. That's OK at this point. Setting new goals is a gradual process. It can't be done all at once.

> *Setting conscious goals in thinking, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors will be a theme throughout the program. It is a continuous process. Staff should practice using their judgment to pick times and circumstances to remind participants to consciously formulate new goals for themselves. This is part of the leverage of motivating for self-change.*

By consciously defining your own goals, you challenge yourself to face up to the question of whether you really want to change.

D.   Identify interventions and controls.

This is the point we have reached now in the process. Lesson 12 will begin to teach skills for intervening in our thinking.

Can you already think about how you might change some of your thinking?

E.   Make a plan for change.

This will be the final and most important project to accomplish in the next phase of the program (Phase II). We will be able to do a draft version of a plan at the end of this phase (Phase I).

The key elements of a plan for change are identification of target thinking and the interventions you plan to apply to control that thinking.

F.   Carry out that plan.

This is the project of Phase III. In Phase III you will practice your plan for change. That means actually intervening and controlling the old ways of thinking you have identified as targets.

At the end of Phase III you will have the skills to continue the process of change and reach the goals you have set for yourself about your attitudes, beliefs, thinking patterns, and behaviors. If your goals are to change, you will be able to change. If your goals are not to change, you will stay as you are.

> *Review the above steps. Encourage feedback and discussion. The objective here is for each participant to grasp the overall process of change as a single, logical process.*

Cognitive change will work if you make it work. The key to it is making conscious, deliberate decisions to control and change your thinking in the day-to-day situations that happen in your life. Change is not automatic. What is automatic is our old ways of thinking. When we deliberately force ourselves to think differently we put our lives under our conscious control. This is the challenge of cognitive change.

No one can prove to you that you should change. You will need to motivate yourself to do it. You can do that by making yourself make a conscious and deliberate decision every time you are faced with the risk of falling back into old ways of thinking.

The skills of this program will make you aware of when this is happening.

If you force yourself to make a conscious choice—will it be the old way or the new way?—you keep the old automatic habit of thinking from taking over. Even if you choose not to change, at least this is something you choose and accept responsibility for. By making yourself choose consciously and deliberately, you are giving yourself the maximum motivation and opportunity to change.

If you try to go through your future on "automatic pilot", there is guaranteed to be no change.

Homework:

Option 1: Write down how you would like to become, that is different from the way you have been in the past.

Option 2: Write down all the reasons you have for changing some of your basic thinking. Then write down what will be hardest about changing this thinking.

Option 3: Interview individually every other member of the group. Ask them to describe their own reasons and motives for changing their thinking. Keep a running log of each kind of reason that you hear. Then compare your own reasons with those of others   in   the   group.

Lesson 12: Interventions for Change

Objectives:

1. Explain and practice some simple techniques of cognitive intervention which: a) interrupt old thinking patterns, and b) encourage new thinking patterns.

2. Have participation understand and appreciate that what and how they think is within their personal control.

Say in Your Own Words:

We can practice some simple techniques for changing our thinking. Some of them are mechanical. For instance, if I want to change my habit of feeling victimized when things don't go my way, I can practice some new though whenever I notice myself feeling victimized. I might think, for instance, "I'm feeling victimized. I'm going to stop it."

Whether I completely stop feeling victimized or not, I have already interrupted my old train of thoughts, just by forcing myself to think these two new thoughts:

    1.   "I'm feeling victimized."

    2.   "I'm going to stop."

Will it work? That depends on a lot of things. It depends, for instance, on whether I mean it when I say to myself, "I'm going to stop." If I mean it enough, I can make it work. I may need to remind myself of all the reasons I have for wanting to stop my victim thinking. In fact, reminding myself of all these reasons may be something I do as part of my intervention.

    3.   Review in my mind my reasons for changing this thinking.

The techniques involved here are called though stopping and self-talk.

> ● **Thought Stopping**
>
> ● **Self-Talk**

Thought stopping is anything I can do to make myself stop thinking what I am thinking at the moment.

> *Give examples. Include physical examples (I could pull on my ear). Give cognitive examples (I could just say, stop). Give elaborate examples and simple examples.*
>
> *Ask the group for examples they can think of. The point to get across is that practically anything might work as a thought stopper. And, on the other hand, things that look like they should work may not work at all. Each individual has to find for themselves those thought stoppers that work.*

Self-talk can be used as thought stoppers.

But self-talk can go beyond just stopping our old thoughts. Self-talk introduces new thoughts.

It is possible to discover self-talk to use as interventions in our thinking that does both things at once. The right kind of self-talk can:

> 1. **Stop our old thinking.**
>
> 2. **Practice new thinking.**

Here are some examples of self-talk that other people have found useful in controlling the thinking that has got them into trouble in the past:

> *Distribute a handout with the following interventions.*

1. "My part" --- Find one part of the situation that you are responsible for. Tell yourself in words that you are responsible for this part of the situation.

Note: you are not asking them to accept all or even most of the responsibility.

2.   "Their Shoes" --- Imagine what the other person is thinking. Tell yourself "He/she is probably thinking……..", and fill in the blanks.

3.   "Respect" --- If you're dehumanizing someone, find a "humanizing" thought about them. Tell yourself this thought in words.

4.   "Consequences" --- For each target pattern, identify a very negative consequence that has occurred in the past. Use this image as an intervention.

5.   "New Person" --- Remind yourself of the person you want to become. Tell yourself in words how you want to be in situations like this one.

6.   "Decent Sentiments" --- Train yourself to notice the decent sentiments toward others you habitually cut off or suppress. Tell yourself in words one positive sentiment you have toward this person or situation.

> *Practice these interventions. Use role plays and thinking reports. Have every participant practice at least one intervention, and have the group cover all six interventions.*
>
> *Explain that these are just suggestions. The point is that each individual can find the interventions that work best for them.*
>
> *The first two interventions (my part and his shoes) are particularly powerful and relevant to antisocial thinking. The first breaks the pattern of categorical, absolute blaming of others. The second makes us consider the other persons perspective. Both contradict and counteract key elements of antisocial thinking.*
>
> *This list of interventions will be used again in Phase II.*

Homework:

Option 1: Pick one or two interventions to apply to your target patterns of thinking, and try them out. Make notes of what happens and report the results back to the group.

Option 2: Try each of these interventions on one occurrence of your target thinking in the next week. Keep notes on what happens and report the results back to the group.

Lesson 13: Barriers to Change

> **Objectives:**
>
> 1. Prepare group members to anticipate their own barriers to change.
>
> 2. Lay the groundwork for overcoming these barriers.

Content:

> **Say in Your Own Words:**

The things we most need to change about ourselves are often the parts of ourselves that are most dear to our hearts. We have learned to be "at home" with our basic attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns.

The fact that we are at home with, and most comfortable with, our habitual attitudes and ways of thinking constitutes the toughest of all barriers to change.

If we change the things about us that make us comfortable in dealing with the world, what's going to happen?

The answer is that we are going to be uncomfortable for awhile. But we won't be terribly uncomfortable, and won't be uncomfortable for long—if we are really serious and whole hearted about change. We will learn new attitude and ways of thinking and whole – new ways of feeling good about ourselves.

In fact, most of us, new ways of thinking that keep us out of trouble with the law point the way to ways of feeling good about ourselves that are much more satisfying (and more real and more reliable and more honest) than anything we have experienced in the past.

> **Our goal is not just to change our thinking and our behavior, but to learn to feel satisfaction and gratification from our new ways of thinking and acting. If we don't feel that gratification, the change won't last.   And learning how to experience satisfaction and gratification from our new ways of thinking is itself something we need to teach ourselves—by practicing new ways of thinking.**

It's like a circle --- only a constructive circle, not a vicious one.

The key is teaching ourselves to change by making ourselves practice change. This is the part you have to do inside yourself.

One of the biggest barriers to change is avoiding making the effort to change.

The answer to this barrier is to be scrupulously honest with yourself about your efforts to change. If you are not trying, don't pretend that you are.

And if you don't try, don't expect change to happen.

Everyone has their own personal barriers to change. It is like running up against a wall.

I'm assuming you start with an honest intention to change. Even with the best of intentions, you will run into barriers, and these barriers will challenge your good intention to change. This is not just a possibility. It is a certainty. Literally hundreds of people have started out on the process of change, only to be beaten by these barriers, and revert back to their old ways.

Here are some of the most common barriers to change:

"Everyone thinks this way."

> This is an attitude and a belief that can come up again and again and wreck our determination to change. We might believe, for example, that everyone is only out for themselves, or that nobody is really honest unless they are afraid of getting caught. If everyone is that way, why should I try to be different.
>
> The answer is that not everybody thinks alike (about anything). The more important answer is that we can control how we think.

"This is how I really feel. I've got to be honest."

> I call this attitude, "The Trap." Because we really believe our beliefs, and we really think our thoughts, we feel entitled to them. If I denied them, I would be dishonest, wouldn't I?
>
> The answer is that it depends. If you change your thoughts and beliefs, then it would be dishonest to stick with the old ones. And that is up to you. What this attitude really means is, "I am not changing."

"I have no choice."

Many of us are used to thinking in terms of black and white choices. For example, "If I don't attack this person they will run over me." Or, "What am I supposed to do, lie down and be a doormat?" When it feels like we have only one possible (acceptable) choice, we are facing this barrier to change.

The answer is to escape the trap we impose in our own thinking. There are always other choices. We can make ourselves think of them. Change does not mean accepting unacceptable alternatives. It means finding alternatives that are responsible and honest and committing ourselves to these goals.

"This time my thoughts are true."

People may identify the patterns of thinking they need to change, and even practice changing them in some situations, but not change them when it matters most. When it matters most, they think (for example), "This time I really am being victimized. That SOB really is being unfair."

The answer is to remind yourself that fair or unfair (right or wrong) is not the point. For every fact in the world, there are hundreds of ways of thinking about that fact. We may feel entitled to our way of thinking, but sticking rigidly to a way of thinking even when it leads to trouble is something we do to ourselves. It is another trap.

One good way of telling that we are falling into a trap of thinking is when we feel absolutely entitled to think and feel just one way.

What kinds of barriers to change have you already discovered? Can you identify any barriers in yourself? Can you identify any barriers in other members of the group?

Any resistance to changing thinking is, at this point in the program, probably a good example of a barrier to change. What are the sticking points that come out in group? What are the patterns of antisocial thinking that group members continue to display? Point these out as examples of barriers to change. Review and discuss them. Be supportive. Don't be accusatory.

Encourage group members to identify their own examples.

Think of a thinking pattern you have targets as a problem but which still occurs in your mind. Remember when that thinking last happened. Did you try to intervene? What habits of thinking are you stuck on?

What are your own barriers to change, so far?

Encourage discussion and participation. Have every group member attempt to answer this question.

Does your environment pose any barriers to change? Do your friends and associates post barriers to change?

The objective of this lesson is to make group members so conscious of these kinds of traps of thinking that they cannot fall into them without being conscious that they are doing it. If they see these patterns as traps, i.e., as inviting distortions, they are not so likely to work. The self-deception necessary for them to be effective is harder to come by.

Homework:

Option 1: Describe your own most important barriers to change. Then describe a strategy for overcoming them.

Option 2: List as many of your personal barriers as you can, and evaluation the power of each. Use a 10-point scale, from 1 = not much of a barrier, to 10 = very much of a barrier. Select your two or three biggest barriers to change. Identify the thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes that support these barriers to change. Then outline a plan for overcoming them.

Lesson 14: Review

Objective:

    1.   Review the material of the last 13 lessons.

    2.   Evaluate the preparation of each group member to proceed to Phase II.

Content:

Say in Your Own Words:

This is our last class in Phase I. Today we are going to review the ideas we have covered in the last few weeks.

    The review of Phase I should be conducted informally but systematically.

> **Engage the group in discussion.   Don't simply lecture.   Ask questions. Get the group members to explain the key concepts and principles of Phase I.**

    Be sure that the key topics are covered. Take time to review the content of the course and make your own list of key topics.

At the end of the group, plan to have an individual review meeting with each group member. Take note of any deficiencies in their understanding of the material. If they are not ready for Phase II make plans to help them get prepared, or have them repeat Phase I. In some cases the program may simply not be appropriate, and different plans should be made.

If a member's attitude is still defiant and uncooperative, point out that they are not meeting the basic conditions of effective participation. Such people should not be promoted into Phase II. On the other hand, they should be given the opportunity to change and re-enter the program. (Note: this principle holds all the way through the program. Defiant group members need to be confronted with this choice at every step of the way, not just at the end of a program phase.)

B.   Phase II --- Building The Foundation of Change

While Phase I is a series of discrete lessons, Phase II is a more open process of group interaction. This section of the manual defines principles and guidelines for that process. It does not include lesson plans for individual group sessions. This section is divided into four parts:

Part I describes the process of using thinking reports to target patterns for change.

Part II describes the use of journal.

Part III describes interventions in thinking.

Part IV describes the construction of a relapse prevention plan.

Construction of the relapse prevention plan is the culmination of Phase II and forms the basis of Phase III: Making Change Happen.

Part 1: Thinking Reports

In Phase II, participants learn to focus down on the particular attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns that lie behind their own patterns of antisocial behavior. While Phase I introduced this process, Phase II displays these patterns in a bright cold, clear light. **Participants must come to see the patterns of their own thinking so clearly and vividly that there is no escaping the conclusion that they must change.**

This must be the primary focus and objective of Phase II groups, until it is accomplished.

Self-understanding and motivation to change go together. Group members must be willing to examine their thinking. This is the compliance we need from them to make the program work. It is the staff's responsibility to direct the offenders' attention to those aspects and consequences of their thinking that will produce self-motivation to change. Our objective is to display what it is that they do in the clearest possible light.

We use thinking reports like lasers.

Using Thinking Reports: The Four Basic Steps

The use of thinking reports in the process of cognitive change has several distinct stages or steps. Sometimes several of these steps can be achieved in one group session and sometimes it takes several sessions just to achieve one step. When thinking reports are first introduced in Phase I, it is wise to proceed slowly, concentrating on the process before we attend to content. In the course of Phase II, it will become possible to move more quickly from a thinking report to the patterns that underlie it, the scope and consequences of these patterns, and to interventions for change. All of these steps may sometimes be accomplished in a single group.

It is, however, important to understand the discrete steps in the process. Practicing each step separately helps us keep a clear focus on the task. Phase II groups should always have a clear focus and purpose in relation to these steps.

Thinking Reports, Step 1: Display the Content of Thoughts and Feelings

Observing the content of thoughts and feelings --- without any interpretation or inference and without looking for any pattern whatsoever --- is the foundation of the thinking report process. The first stage of thinking reports is to uncover and focus attention on the thoughts and feelings that the person experienced, just as they went through his mind.

This is the pure phenomenology of the client's experience, and it is the foundation of everything we do with thinking reports.

Feelings are often the best place to start. It is often easier to remember what we were feeling than what we were thinking. Paying attention to feelings helps us stay focused on the phenomenology of the experience (as opposed to debating or intellectualizing.) Asking the person to recall the feelings he was having at the beginning stages of a situation can help bring the whole experience into focus.

We are aiming for a detached, objective recognition of the sequence of the person's thoughts and feelings. Ask him to recall and describe each step of the sequence, even if the content seems clear in the written report. Bring it into focus and guide his attention to the content of his experience. **We are teaching the skill of being an objective observer to our own subjective experiences.**

Remember, this stage of the process is purely descriptive, not interpretive. This demands that we practice objectivity and don't make judgments on their thinking. This attitude helps us establish a foundation of trust as the client sees that we are not out to judge him.

Be sure that Step 1 is solidly accomplished before you proceed to Step 2. In advanced thinking report groups, it is still important to return again and again to the basic phenomenology of the client's thinking. This is the grounding and the foundation of cognitive

self-change. Every thinking report group should begin with a presentation by the participant of the pure content of his thinking.

Thinking Reports, Step2: Uncover Patterns

The patterns we are looking for are the cognitive-emotional foundations of criminal behavior.

Our objective is to uncover and display the subjective logic of their criminal acts.

Offenders' ways of thinking and feeling embody mechanisms (patterns) that push them toward criminal behavior. These are not abstract, conceptual connections. They are concrete and vivid experiences---thoughts and feelings---that promote, justify, and reward criminal actions.

These patterns are usually completely habitual and automatic.

We are looking for ways of thinking and feeling that permit the offender to do crimes and feel good about it.

We all do the things that we find rewarding. We need to solve the very individual and personal puzzle of how an offender manages to feel good by doing his crimes. The key is in their thinking.

1. Ways of feeling justified. These involve old-fashioned rationalizations and other cognitive mechanisms (e.g., victim stance) that make criminal acts seem right, necessary, or reasonable in the offender's mind.

2. Ways of feeling rewarded, i.e., reinforced for the behavior. Examples are feelings of self-pride, power, and personal integrity that comes from committing crimes. In thinking reports our task is to uncover the cognitive mechanisms that make criminal actions rewarding.   We also need to discover how these thinking patterns themselves are rewarding. (Thinking is a kind of action, and is subject to the same principles of reinforcement as any other kind of action.) For example, how does taking a certain attitude reduce a feeling of pain (negative reinforcement) or increase a feeling of gratification (positive reinforcement)? These mechanisms of positive and negative reinforcement are the connections we need to help the client break.

Does a thinking report display a way of thinking and feeling that supports, justifies, or rewards irresponsibility? These are the features of cognitive structure for which we are looking. We are looking for patterns of "subjective logic" that lead the person to irresponsible acts; help him to feel good about doing them (at least at the time, and possibly later); prevent him from

considering the rights and feelings of other people; and prevent him from feeling guilt about it afterward.

This is something like solving a mystery, and it should feel like that. When this step goes well, the offender, the facilitator, and the group are all engaged in unraveling clues to discover the hidden pattern that explains the behavior. It should be engaging, interesting, and even exciting. It should be a shared experience.

This stage of pattern recognition usually does not require extensive background knowledge of the client's personality or criminal history. We are examining the subjective logic of his behavior as he experienced it at a particular time and place. A single thinking report may reveal a pattern of thinking that accounts for a considerable portion of the person's criminality.

Note: an objective, non-judgmental perspective is essential to this stage of the process. There is no room for defensiveness by the client. The client needs to perceive staff as supporting his search for patterns, not as waiting for a chance to condemn him.

Thinking Reports, Step 3: Uncover the Scope of the Pattern

Is the thinking that we see in a single thinking report typical of this person's pattern? Usually it is, but we can't take that for granted. The offender needs to see this for himself, and we need to see it too. We need to display the full scope of the pattern just as we display the single instance of the pattern. This is not a matter of making a "clinical inference." It is a matter of direct observation, based on what the client shows us. Like the original discovery of the pattern, the scope of that pattern needs to be grounded in the phenomenology of the client's experience.

Are there other examples of this pattern of thinking, or is this a unique instance? Most importantly, is the pattern displayed here similar to the patterns behind the person's other criminal acts?

The simplest way to answer these questions is to ask, but we are not looking for a simple "yes" or "no". We want the client to really experience the force of the pattern. We want him to see the pattern and the extent of it, and the control it has exercised over his life with the force and emotional impact of perception. In other words, they need to really see it.

You can ask the offender if there are other examples that he can remember when he had the same or similar feelings, the same or similar thoughts. Ask him to recall specific incidents, including incidents of overt criminality. Often this way of directing the client's attention can result very quickly, possibly in a single group meeting, in their recognition of how a single attitude or thinking pattern has completely dominated their life.

Thinking Reports, Step 4: Appreciate the Significance of the Patterns

Does the offender now see and appreciate the connection between their thinking and their behavior? Do they see that their thoughts and feelings, as they have learned to perform them automatically, make irresponsible (violent, criminal) actions practically inevitable? The objective here is for the client to recognize that they will not be able to control or eliminate their target behavior unless they control or eliminate the specific thinking that supports it. The other side of the coin, of course, is that they can control or eliminate those behaviors if they do intervene in these thinking patterns.

Everything depends on how vivid and meaningful this understanding is to them. If it is shallow and purely intellectual, it will have little effect. The insight we are looking for should have the impact of a ton of bricks.

A series of reports with this kind of impact will develop powerful motivation for self-change. We need to stay with the process until this is achieved.

Individual journal assignments (Part II, below) should be used at this point to focus the offender's attention on their own patterns and the implication of these patterns.

These steps (1-4) constitute the foundation of cognitive self-change. They establish a foundation for motivation. If the person is still completely unmotivated, have him look again at the thinking he uses to feel OK about the way he is now. Then if he chooses to keep using these patterns (cognitive mechanisms), he is at least conscious of his responsibility in choosing to do so. Being conscious that you are responsible for your actions is a powerful motivator for being responsible, even for criminals.

The next stage is to target these thinking patterns for intervention.

Format of Thinking Report Groups

Thinking report groups in Phase II should follow a few simple guidelines:

1. **Each group focuses on one thinking report. Group members take turns presenting their reports. This should be scheduled so that members can prepare their reports in advance of the group meeting.**

2. **Thinking reports should be displayed on flip charts. In some circumstances group members can write their reports on flip chart pages in front of the group. Or they might come to the room in a few minutes early and write out their report beforehand.**

3. **Depending upon the total time available for Phase II, staff should allow group members a degree of flexibility in choosing the topics of their thinking reports.**

> Sometimes situations that have nothing obvious to do with criminal behavior can reveal very significant (and criminal) patterns of thinking. If there is limited time, staff may need to be more directive in the selection of thinking report topics.

> 4. **In the course of Phase II, every group member should do thinking reports based on: a) their earliest experiences in criminal behavior; b) their most serious criminal behaviors; c) their current offense; and d) everyday situations that trigger their criminal thinking patterns without overt criminal behavior.**

> 5. **Thinking report groups should be interesting and engaging. It is a process of discovery.**

Thinking report groups follow the principles of group process described in Section 2 of this Manual.

Part II: Journals

In Phase II, journals become the offenders' vehicle for self-discovery, self-awareness, self-evaluation and self-change. Journals offer program staff and the offender a tool for individual study. The journal will meet the offenders' individual or prescriptive needs by combining, focusing, and structuring all the other program processes. The journal also becomes a "safe place" for offenders to first expose some of their less attractive or more sensitive cognitions---things that they may fear exposing within their individual groups. Often the first real, meaningful, or serious work begins in the journal, as many offenders use this process to test the water. Journals become a place for individual study and self-evaluation as well as a means for staff to review offender efforts.

Physically journals are a binder, notebook, or folder that an offender uses to work on assignments and store information for future use.

Journals are more than a log, they are a focused and organized process of study into one's cognitive process. If we think of an individual's cognitive structure as a kind of jigsaw puzzle, the journal is the process of putting the puzzle together. As with a jigsaw puzzle. The study and understanding of an individual's cognitive structure is done in stages and requires a lot of hard, tedious work.

Each stage of journal work described below is illustrated by the example of one offender, who we call John. John is a 35 year-old offender service a five-year sentence for aggravated assault and burglary. John has just started the journal process in the program. We follow John through his possible journal assignments for each stage of the journal process.

Stage I

When you work with a jigsaw puzzle, you first must dump the puzzle and turn over the pieces. The offender must begin the process of identifying the pieces of his cognitive structure by "dumping them on the table" in his journal. This stage explores all the potentially antisocial elements of the offender's cognitive structure. In Stage I the offender is working to develop a rough sketch of his personal problem areas, and the related cognitions that supports his antisocial behavior. As with the puzzle, the offender is not yet working on putting the pieces together, but is examining them closely, and placing them in relative proximity for future work. This is a stage of broad exploration rather than an in-depth study of any one pattern. You can't put the pieces together until you have collected a majority of the pieces, you have a basic understanding of how or where they fit, and you have developed the curiosity (motivation) to undertake the task ahead.

Example: John, in this stage, will be working on developing a rough sketch of his thinking in problematic situations or any situation that leads to antisocial behavior.

>   **STEP I** – Have John list all the situations in his life that he can remember that resulted in a physical altercation.

>   **STEP II** – Have John do a thinking report for each of these situations.

>   By reviewing these thinking reports, staff (and to some extent, John) will begin to see patterns or possible patterns to explore at this and subsequent stages.

Stage II

In this stage of the journal development, the offender will be establishing the border of the puzzle by "framing in" his cognitive processes. The offender will identify his major behavioral problem areas to establish the "scope" or "frame" of the cognitions that he needs to change. In this stage, offenders will be exploring all of their antisocial behaviors and the cognitions that support them. They will establish an outline of their antisocial thinking patterns, and an understanding of how their thinking contributes to problematic behaviors. They will develop a personal list of target thinking patterns.

Example: In this stage, you will have John look at all of the information and ideas that he has gathered and attempt to frame them in by determining their connection and importance in relation to thinking and behaviors, from both the present and the past.

>   **STEP I** – Ask John to give examples of recent situations that have occurred in which he wanted to assault someone.

>   **STEP II** – Have John write thinking reports on these situations and compare the thinking with the other reports to check for similarities.

STEP III – Review this work with John and note recurring and similar patterns of thinking. These will become the important targets for change. Make sure that John sees and understands the similarities and connections. Focus on the patterns of thinking, not on physical consequences. (In a correctional environment, external controls inhibit assaultive behavior. John must be led to see that his thinking poses a risk for this behavior, even though he does not do it.)

Stage III

In this stage, the offender will be studying the pieces in grater detail and beginning the process of putting the pieces together. The offender will take each of the patterns that he has identified in earlier stages of the journal and put them under a "microscope." By studying each of the patterns in detail (primarily by doing thinking reports), the offender will identify the complete structure of the individual pattern of thinking. The offender will pay particular attention to beliefs, mindsets, mental attitudes, feelings, trigger thoughts, and justifications, and how this whole network of cognitions supports the related behavior. Offenders will be conceptualizing what we refer to as a "pattern" or "cycle" of thinking, literally diagramming on paper the pattern or cycle of thinking. In this stage, the offender begins to clearly see that his behavior is not in any way random, but rather is structured by his own predetermined cognition. This allows the offender to take responsibility for his thinking and the related behavior, as well as understanding that in order to change he must change his thinking. This stage of the journal becomes a powerful "mirror" for the offender, who now has to look at himself without the distortions that he has been able to use all of his life. Even with the most pro-social people this process is very uncomfortable. For offenders this process provokes a lot of fear and emotional stress. This stage also creates a good portion of the motivation that an offender needs to even move on to the next stage. That motivation is created by looking in the mirror and being uncomfortable with what you see.

Example: In this stage, John will be working on his understanding of the content of the patterns that he has discovered to date.

STEP I – Ask John to review all the reports and work that he has done on a particular pattern and identify the beliefs, attitudes, mindsets, justifications, driving thoughts, and related feelings that support the overall pattern of thinking and its outcome.

STEP II – Review with John what he has discovered. Work to establish with John an understanding of the overall pattern of thinking by drawing a sketch (a diagram) of the overall pattern. Focus on the steps of the structure and how one step leads into the next.

Stage IV

As the pieces of the puzzle become clearer, the offender will be expected to begin the process of developing "interventions" and "strategies" to control his thinking and the behavior connected to that thinking.

In this stage, offenders will use the information and understanding that they have gained to create, practice, and evaluate cognitive strategies for intervention. Offenders will study the individual patterns they have identified in Stage III to find specific targets that can be changed or controlled through their direct efforts. Once target elements have been identified, the offender creates new cognitive patterns that will act as interventions in the pattern of thinking. (See the section on Interventions.) A well conceived intervention can change a whole pattern.

> This stage of the journal starts the actual change process. Offenders are asked to tear down old cognitive structures and create new ones to take their place. This stage requires a great deal of support and guidance from the program staff. Offenders will easily become frustrated and give up, even when they seem to have strong motivation for change.

At this stage offenders are often hungry for staff input in their attempt to create interventions. The strategy is not to give them answers, but rather to guide them to find the answers themselves. If the offenders create their own intervention strategies, they will own them and they will have developed a skill that is even more valuable than the individual skill. They have learned to create intervention strategies for themselves. Cognitive interventions are something that we all do every day of our lives in order to stay in line in a pro-social world. Most of us learn to intervene in our thoughts because we consider the consequence for ourselves and others. Imagine if you didn't think of all these consequences, but only of getting what you wanted without getting caught. This is what the offender is up against in his effort to develop cognitive interventions. All of the self-imposed cognitive limits that are second nature in our pro-social thinking need to be learned by offenders as new, deliberate, and conscious behaviors.

Example: In this stage, John will be developing intervention strategies to combat his pattern of thinking. The strategies will be based on his knowledge of his patterns and his understanding of what fuels it.

> Have John identify the key thinking in a particular pattern of thinking and create alternate thinking that will redirect the pattern of thinking. Example: If part of John's pattern involves degrading or dehumanizing someone through the use of insulting thoughts such as "asshole", John would target this thinking by intervening in all thoughts that degrade or dehumanize others. When he finds himself thinking thoughts such as "asshole", he would immediately replace that thought with another that does not contribute to the destructive energy of the pattern. For example: "boy, that Tom" is not the same as "that asshole Tom" and becomes a degree of intervention by

controlling some of the emotion and energy of the thought pattern. In this stage you will also have John explore and critically evaluate some of the broad attitudes, beliefs, and mindsets that he carries with him through life that are having an adverse effect on his ability to lead a pro-social lifestyle. The goal is to have John begin to build a new set of attitudes, beliefs, and mindsets that support a pro-social lifestyle.

Stage V

Offenders in this stage will begin utilizing their intervention strategies in every day institutional situations. The journal, at this point, evolves into an evaluation tool creating special projects and assignments that will encourage practice of skills. This is the practice swing before offenders go to bat in the real world. In most institutions, there are ample opportunities to practice interventions, offering program offenders the chance to practice intervention strategies through trial and error. Offenders should be encouraged to critically evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions and make changes continually. This is a process of "fine tuning", very much like one would tune a car to get it just right. Offenders should be supported even if their attempts are less than successful, provided they are making a genuine effort. The attempt is the most important part of the process. If the process does fail, encourage and challenge the offender to evaluate his strategy in relation to the situation, to refine his intervention strategy, and to try again. As with all of us, skill comes with practice, and we are asking offenders to practice something totally new. We are asking offenders to be responsible for and to control their own thinking.

Example: In this stage, John will be expected to incorporate his learning to date, as well as the strategies for intervention that he has developed, into his everyday life. This stage becomes the batting practice for real life. John will practice and hone new cognitive skills to effectively operate in his environment without the use of his old criminal or antisocial patterns of thinking.

> **STEP I -** Develop with John a system to evaluate every day situations and his use of his newly created interventions in those situations. Example: Have John record any and all situations that create stress over a period of time, complete with a description of the cognitive and behavioral intervention strategies that he used in the specific situation.
>
> **STEP II –** Review with John his ongoing progress in using his new intervention strategies. Make sure to support and encourage John to practice his skills in any and all situations, not just those that are extremely high risk. Also, insure that John is reporting all relevant situations in his journal, not just those that he is successful in intervening. John will learn and develop more if he is honest with himself and the program staff about the success or failure of his intervention strategies.
>
> **STEP III –** Have John develop as complete a list as he can of high risk situations-i.e., situations that have triggered antisocial reactions in the past. Have John describe in

writing his old response and his new strategy for intervention, for each of these situations.

STEP IV – Create role plays in a group that will test John's ability to use his intervention strategies in situations for which he has not been able to plan.

The Journal Review Process

Staff must supervise, monitor, and evaluate offenders' journal work by conducting scheduled journal reviews. If staff fails to conduct journal reviews on a regular basis, most offenders will not do the work on their own, and will have met their cynical expectations of authority. Weekly reviews are recommended. During this review, the staff member and offender will examine and discuss the work done and establish the direction for the next period. All direction should be established, if possible, by mutual agreement. Individual journal reviews are an excellent opportunity to foster cooperation between the program staff and the offender. Journal reviews need not take much time. They should not become problem solving, advise, or counseling sessions. As a rule journal reviews can be done in 30 minutes or less and rarely take more than an hour. It is better to leave them questioning than to try to provide complete answers. The focus of the process is always self-discovery.

Special Journal Assignments

Not all journal assignments need to directly relate to explicitly antisocial cognitive patterns. Some other areas may need to be addressed in order to clear the way for change. Most of the time these special assignments (projects) require more than just writing in their journals. Often they involve social interaction or work that is more intrusive than normal journal assignments. The following are some examples of how special journal assignments can be created to support cognitive development in specific areas of deficiency:

EMPATHY – John just can't seem to break the belief that his attitudes, actions, and behaviors don't really hurt anyone.

Ask him to define what a victim is, and then compare this definition with his personal experiences of being victimized. Once he sees that his sense of being victimized is much greater than his ownership of victimizing others, ask him to look at his crimes and list all of his victims (not just the ones affected directly, but also the ones affected indirectly---his family, friends of the victim, insurance company, policy holders, etc.). Also make sure that he understands the concept of emotional victimization which is often more damaging than the physical victimization.

Use physical images and metaphors. For instance, once he has accomplished the above, ask him to draw a fish pond on a large piece of flip chart paper. In the pond have him place various sizes of fish, each fish representing someone that he has

victimized in his life. The bigger the fish, the greater the victimization. On each fish place the initials of the person that has been victimized and color code the fish depending on if the person was emotionally or physically victimized or both. Have John display this fish pond somewhere he can view it over a period of time, and ask himself a question every time he faces it. Have you been fishing today? If John answers yes, then he adds the new fish and must discuss the victimization with the new fish.

NEW SELF – John is having a problem using his new cognitive interventions because he finds himself acting automatically based on old systems of reaction. John needs to learn to access and evaluate situations from a more pro-social prospective, in order to make his interventions work.

Ask John to think of three people in his life that he really respects, and would like to be more like (make sure that he picks pro-social role models). Ask him to list all of the characteristics that he can think of for each of these people. From this list create a profile for one fictitious person that has all the strengths and character traits of all three "real people". Give this fictitious character a nickname that can be remembered easily. Ask John to picture this person on his shoulder and in every stressful situation, or in any situation that requires even the smallest decision, have him simply ask what would this person do? This character becomes a "safe" or "non-judgmental" way for John to evaluate his responses. It does not require unrealistically "straight" of "square" point of view. Very often this exercise becomes a very powerful experience for the offender, possibly gibing him his first sense of where he is going in this change process.

ISOLATION – John has a problem isolating from people, especially when he feels inferior.

Ask John to develop a list of those people whom he feels comfortable talking or relating to, along with a second list of people with whom he feels uncomfortable talking to or relating. Have John set up a situation each day that requires him to address and communicate with someone on his "uncomfortable" list. Have him pay particular attention to the experience he has in each of the situations. Be sure to support any progress and challenge John to continue working in this area in order to develop confidence in communicating in stressful situations.

Summary

Journals represent a process, a tool, and a vehicle for the journey into personal discovery through the development of awareness and understanding of one's own cognitive structures. The journal provides an objective process for self-examination of one's patterns of thinking, belief structures, mindsets and mental attitudes, and their associated behaviors. The use and effectiveness of journals is limited only by the creativity of the staff and offender working in the process.

Part III: Interventions for Change

Review Lesson 12 of Phase I---"Interventions for Change".

Interventions should be introduced into Phase II when the offender is judged by the staff facilitators to be ready to make use of them. This should be after the offender has developed significant understanding and appreciation of his target thinking patterns. (If interventions are introduced too early, offenders will run off into the process of "change" without understanding what they have to change or why.) On the other hand, recognizing that there are specific things they can do to control their thinking can help offenders accept responsibility for their thinking.

If Phase II is limited to six months or less, it is recommended that interventions (as well as journals and relapse prevention plans) be introduced gradually, on an individual basis. When a group member can benefit from practicing interventions, they should begin to do so. They can then use their thinking reports to display their efforts at intervention. The rest of the group may still be at the stage of identifying target patterns of thinking. If Phase II extends longer than six months, it might be desirable to break the group into two distinct levels, distinguished by the introduction of interventions. These levels could be presented in distinct groups if there are appropriate numbers of offenders for each group.

Interventions in thinking are not taught as a precise, structured process. The key to making interventions work is the individual's determination to make them work. This point must not get lost in the mechanics of applying interventions.

On the other hand, it is important that offenders see that interventions are specific, concrete actions that they are capable of performing.

There are a number of so-called "**cognitive skills**" programs designed for offenders that can provide a rich variety of interventions in thinking. (Examples are problem solving, assertiveness training, and anger management.) Staff are referred to the bibliography of this manual for a list of comprehensive cognitive skills programs for offenders. If cognitive skills are taught in other programs to participants in this program, these skills should be exploited as interventions for cognitive change. If cognitive skills are not taught in other programs at your institution, staff can refer to the books and manuals for these programs to develop their own interventions and strategies for teaching new cognitive skills.

Interventions are the specific acts offenders can perform to stop their targeted thinking patterns. The essentials of interventions are:
1. Interventions are specific actions which can be performed whenever a target pattern begins to occur. These actions are generally, but not necessarily, always cognitive acts themselves.

2. The immediate consequence of an intervention is the interruption of a target pattern of thinking.

3.   Interventions should be followed by new ways of thinking. (Note: this is a primary application of cognitive skills training within a program of cognitive change.)   In practice, new thinking responses are themselves effective interventions in old ways of thinking. A single application of "self-talk" can both interrupt old thinking and introduce new thinking.

The practice of specific, concrete interventions should be supplemented by practicing new attitudes and mindsets. This is not just a process of stopping specific trains of thought, but a process of rehearsing new attitudes and points of view. This should be taught as a specific skill.

For example, if an offender's goal is to respond to directions given by authorities without resentment, he should define in his own mind how he intends to think and feel about these kinds of situations. Then he should practice these thoughts and feelings, not just when he is directed to do something, but in his imagination and as frequently as he can remember to do it throughout the day. His goal is to make himself familiar and comfortable with this new way of thinking. This is a process of rehearsal and it can't be practiced as an individual journal assignment, and reviewed in group as a thinking report.

Teaching Interventions:

Step 1: Decide on an individual basis when an offender is ready to seriously apply and benefit from practicing interventions in h is thinking patterns.

Step 2:   Review the interventions from Phase I (Lesson 13).   Use individual journal assignments to have each offender develop their own interventions for their own targets thinking patterns.

Step 3: Use individual journal assignment and thinking report groups to practice new thinking patterns to replace the patterns targeted for change.

Step 4: Use individual journal assignments to have each offender identify and rehearse new attitudes and points of view which support new thinking patterns.

Step 5: Organize each offender's targeted thinking patterns and their interventions into the form of a Relapse Prevention Plan.

Part IV: The Relapse Prevention Contract

Relapse prevention planning accepts the fact that some degree of relapse is bound to occur. This is especially true when a behavior we are trying to control is cognitive behavior---old ways of thinking will continue to appear for a long time. The strategy of relapse prevention is

to respond to small relapses in a deliberate and planned way in order to prevent major relapses. The relapse prevention contract is not a formula for avoiding trouble. It is a working tool for keeping trouble small. The active application of the relapse plan is the explicit objective of Phase III treatment groups.

Relapse prevention strategy is based on diverting risk at the earliest possible moment. Risk of criminal relapse is identified at the earliest stages of cognitive and emotional experience. Interventions are applied when high risk thinking can first be detected. By the time these internal experiences translate into behaviors, it may be too late.

At the end of Phase II, offenders compose a relapse prevention contract. This contract is the culmination of all the work they have done so far. It includes a review of past antisocial behavior and the thinking that supported it. It includes a description of "high risk" situations they are likely to face in the future, based on their experience in the past. It also includes specific interventions and strategies for avoiding and reducing risk of criminal behavior in the future. While offenders are constructing a relapse prevention plan, they also need to be practicing it. This period of the program, therefore, includes intensive practice of new cognitive behaviors. Offenders develop new cognitive skills by practicing cognitive interventions and new ways of thinking, including new attitudes and beliefs.

This is a period of the program when offenders need considerable support and guidance from staff. They are entering new territory and their relationship with program staff may be a critical interpersonal relationship at this time. We need to convey to them that they can succeed in and be welcome in the world of socially responsible human beings. We need to guide the offender, not just in replacing old ways of thinking and acting, but in experiencing pride and satisfaction in the change.

Development of a relapse prevention contract can take anywhere from four weeks to six months, depending upon the structure of the program. The contract is developed within the structure of Phase II. When they begin their relapse prevention contract, they devote their thinking reports and journal projects to the task. The contract should be developed in close collaboration between the offender and their journal staff. The staff guides and supports the process, but does not do the work for the offender. The project must represent the offender's own work and effort.

The relapse prevention contract is the "graduation project" of Phase II. It is to be reviewed and formally accepted by the treatment team. This marks the offender's official completion of Phase II.

The completed relapse prevention contract serves as a guide to the offender, his Phase III treatment group, and others who support him in the process of change.

Elements of a Relapse Prevention Contract

Step 1 – Identification of Major Life Patterns

Offenders in this stage of relapse prevention contract development need to examine all of their previous thinking reports and journal projects. Based on this review, the offender needs to identify four-eight major "life patterns" that have been destructive to himself or others.

Each offender should assign a word or label to each pattern. For instance, almost all offenders will be able to identify some version of victim-stance thinking. They may use the term "victim-stance" to label that pattern, or they may want to use another term that better captures their own way of experiencing that pattern. The key is for each offender to use terms that are meaningful to him.

In addition to a personal label, the offender must provide a description or definition of how that pattern functions in his mind to promote antisocial behavior. Each offender must define for themselves each of the major life patterns that they have identified. Their description may include schematic diagrams of their cycles of thinking, resulting in an antisocial action. It must be presented in such a way that it is understandable to the offender and staff members.

Step 2 – Examples of Patterns in Real Life Situations

The offender must draw from his own program records (thinking reports and journal projects) to display real life examples of his key patterns in action. These examples must include descriptions of the situation, a report of their thinking, a description of their behavior, and the consequences of that behavior.

Step 3 – Identification of Attitudes, Beliefs, and Mindsets

Attitudes, beliefs, and mindsets underlie our thinking, but may not always be expressed as conscious thoughts in any given situation. It, therefore, takes a special effort to identify what are the attitudes, beliefs and mindsets that are operating in various situations. This is usually not an especially difficult process. Most offenders can immediately describe these elements of cognition, once what to look for is understood.

These underlying elements of cognitive structure may be the most important elements of an offender's cognitive pattern. They are often the roots of the pattern and unless they are changed, intervention on surface thoughts will be only temporary.

Step 4 – Identification of Intervention Points---"Red Flags"

Each offender must identify for himself key points in his target thinking pattern in which: 1) he can clearly recognize that the high risk pattern is happening, and 2) he can apply a conscious and deliberate intervention to stop that pattern.

This is one of the most critical stages of developing a relapse prevention plan. If an offender seriously engages himself in this process, he will be well prepared for preventing relapse into criminal behavior. If his efforts are superficial, the project is likely to have no value whatsoever.

Step 5 – Identification of High Risk Situations/People/Places

Most of the effort at controlling relapse is directed at the cognitive foundations of criminal behavior. However, the complete relapse prevention plan must also take account of those objective situations in the world that pose high risk to trigger their target patterns.

Each offender should survey their past antisocial behavior and identify the situations, and kinds of situations, that have been associated with that behavior. Special attention should be paid to any efforts they have made in the past to stop their criminal behavior, but failed. Situations that triggered relapse in the past are likely to trigger relapse in the future. If substance abuse is a factor in an offender's pattern (and it usually is), special attention should be given to situations that pose risk of relapse to substance abuse.

Pay particular attention to factors such as friends and associates (spending time with criminal associates is a strong predictor of criminal behavior), closing down the channel of

communication with responsible people (including their Phase III group), and "victim-stance" thinking that is used to justify abandoning the effort to learn a responsible form of life.

Step 6 – Intervention Strategies

During this stage of the contract, offenders will work on developing plans for intervention in high risk thinking and behaviors. These interventions will consist of both behavioral interventions as well as cognitive or "thinking" interventions. Each pattern should have several potential strategies for intervention that can fit the types of situations in which the pattern is likely to arise.

These plans must be tested to real life, day-to-day situations. They should also be tested in mock situations or role plays.

Each offender must develop his own personal intervention strategies, even if they are, in their general form, very similar to the interventions other offenders use. The key is for the offender to internalize and experience each intervention as personally meaningful to him. In this case one size doesn't fit all.

> **Practicing these interventions in Phase II is essential preparation for Phase III.**

C.   Phase III---Making Change Happen

With criminal offenders, their active effort to control their own relapse behaviors, including their antisocial attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns, amounts to genuine characterological change.   The struggle itself defines an essentially pro-social orientation.   The more they put themselves into it, the more pro-social they make themselves. On the other hand, if their efforts are superficial and self-serving, they will remain as antisocial as before. They will be practicing---not changing---the underlying attitudes, beliefs, and thinking patterns that lie at the root of their criminal behavior.

The more they put themselves into it, the more pro-social they make themselves to be.

Phase III is the process of applying a plan for change in the context of real life. Ideally, Phase III takes place in the community following incarceration. If necessary, Phase III can be designed as a follow up to Phases I and II while an offender remains incarcerated.

The Relapse Prevention Plan written at the end of Phase II is the guideline for Phase III.

Phase III lasts from 6-12 months. Group meetings are held two times a week. Participants use daily journals, thinking reports, and group discussions are methods to monitor and reinforce their efforts to intervene in high risk thinking patterns and to practice new, responsible thinking.

Staff use thinking reports, journal assignments, and the group process described in earlier sections of the manual to facilitate Phase III.

Self-Risk-Management

Phase III groups are task oriented. That task is to monitor and support each member's efforts at self-risk-management.

Each participant in Phase III should understand and accept the task of self-risk-management. Utilizing their relapse prevention plan as a guide, each member must challenge themselves every day in managing their risk to re-offend. This means:

1) Being alert to their high risk situations and their high risk thinking patterns.

2) Conscientiously applying interventions whenever high risk thinking occurs.

3) Being scrupulously honest with themselves about their determination to change and their efforts to accomplish that change.

4) Constantly renewing their commitment and motivation to change.

The objective of Phase III groups is to monitor and support this process for each individual member. The process involves criticism, in that it aims to sharpen each member's alertness to their risks and their need to control those risks. But it is also supportive. The atmosphere of the group must be cooperative, not adversarial. Although individual confrontations may from time to time be adversarial in form, such confrontations must not dominate the atmosphere of the group. Each group meeting should include a report from each member on his efforts to apply new thinking to the situations they have encountered since the last group meeting.

Facilitator's primary task is to keep this process focused and meaningful. Everyone should experience Phase III with a sense of urgency. Since the risks are high, the controls and interventions will only work if they are applied with the utmost watchfulness and utmost energy. Complacency and resentment (e.g., of the process) are certain signs of relapse into old attitudes. Nowhere in the program is the challenge to simultaneously maintain both direction and cooperation greater or more important than in Phase III. If and when serious relapse begins to occur, the offender will almost certainly cut off his channel of communication with staff and the group and will cease to cooperate. Old attitudes of resentment and "victim-stance thinking" will displace the spirit of cooperation. He may pretend to cooperate and cover his relapse through blatant lying, but when he is detected, old defensive attitudes will probably be clear and obvious. It may feel to the staff facilitator as if he was dealing with an offender at the beginning stages of Phase I, and in a sense, he is. It may not be possible to stop the process of relapse once it has gone to this point. The staff, however, can make the offender be as conscious as possible of what is happening. This sets the stage for the offender's eventual re-entry into the program. Failures become the foundation of future successes. The stronger the effort an offender makes in avoiding relapse, the more strength he can call upon when relapse does begin to occur, and the easier it is for staff and the group to pull him back. For all of these reasons, it is essential to practice relapse prevention through self-risk-management for all we're worth—<u>before</u> relapse begins to occur.

> The fundamental challenge of Phase III is the same as earlier phases: to challenge the offender to be honest and self-critical in his daily efforts to change, and at the same time to maintain a genuine spirit of cooperation, not forced compliance. This is the art of correctional intervention.

A Format for Phase III Groups

Group facilitators should use their own imagination, skills, and judgment in conducting Phase III groups. The following is an outline of basic activities, using a format that has proven effective in outpatient settings.

1.   Have each group member share and explain their Relapse Prevention Plan to the group.

With a new group, this activity can easily take the first two or three group meetings. It is important that members display not just the content of their plans (including target patterns and interventions), but also convey what these patterns and interventions mean to them. Their presentations should demonstrate their commitment to change.

As new members enter the Phase III group, they should present their Relapse Prevention Plan as their first major act of participation in the group. (This should probably not be their very first meeting). Other group members should either present brief summaries of their Relapse Prevention Plans during the meeting, or give the new member written summaries of their plans.

2.   Begin each group with a report from each member on their activities since the last group meeting.

The focus of this review is on their experiences of risk and their efforts to manage those risks. It must be established as a group norm that members concentrate on noticing risks, not on minimizing them. A member who has "nothing significant to report" is not paying attention, and needs to be confronted. Members are not to be criticized because their old thinking patterns continue to occur. They will occur, but what matters is how they respond to these thoughts, and how soon, and how effectively.

When Phase III is functioning as it should, each meeting is an intense and focused group experience. There should not be room for the slightest doubt by group members about why they are there. The dangers of relapse must be ever present on their minds. Relaxing attention is an early sign of relapse. Each group should revitalize each member's commitment to change, and to the programmatic process of achieving it.

3.   Include focus reports on the specific risk management issues of individual members.

Phase III cannot afford to devote whole group meetings to individual members. The risks faced and managed by everyone in the group need to be supported at every meeting. At the same time, each group meeting can include some time---say 20 to 30 minutes---devoted to specific risk management issues faced by an individual member. These "focus sessions" can either be scheduled in advance or done spontaneously in response to a need presented by a group member.

4.   Use daily journals to challenge each participant to stay keenly alert to their risks and their response to them. Review and critique the journals. Demonstrate, by your attention, that you recognize the urgency of the task.

5.   Encourage the development of pro-social support system.

This goes beyond the specific goals of cognitive change.

The fact is that for change to last, it must take root in new relationships, new activities, and new ways of life. Phase III should actively encourage and support members in establishing new support systems. These can be formal support systems like AA and NA. They can be volunteer organizations and activities. They can be informal social activities with coworkers and neighbors.

The practice of new relationships is essential to learning to experience new ways of thinking as rewarding, and not just as a struggle.

As Phase III proceeds, establishment of new support systems can be included within each member's revised relapse prevention plan.

SECTION 4: *Managing Problem Behavior*

Managing Problem Behavior:
Strategies and Examples

When working with offenders in a group, many problems may arise. It is a real challenge to manage and control these problems. It is especially difficult to manage these problems and at the same time to develop a cooperative relationship between staff and offenders. Authoritarian control is just one of the many pitfalls staff face in managing offender groups. Permissiveness is another.

Problems that might seem minor with an individual become major in a group. Groups of offenders experience a "contagion effect" in which the behavior of one individual can quickly make a group dysfunctional. The group can "gang up" on the staff and the staff's impulse may be to use their authority as part of the power struggle. When this happens, we lose, even if we win.

This program is based on "choice" and "self-change". This means we must follow certain guidelines in our management of group behavior. We must not use our authority in a threatening, punitive, or controlling way to "crush" the problem. This is not to say that one can not use authority. In fact, the use of authority is essential, but the way we use authority is critical. We depersonalize our authority. (Refer to Section 2: Principles of Intervention and Communication. The principles defined in Section 2 are designed to minimize disruptive behavior.)

Awareness of "choice" and "individual responsibility" must always be present. If we control or dictate, we promote compliance, not acceptance of responsibility. We most certainly don't promote internal change.

We recommend the following guidelines for managing disruptive group behavior:

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Guidelines For Managing Group Behavior

DON'T	DO
● *threaten*	● *set limits clearly*
● *make moral judgments*	● *give objective feedback*
● *debate or argue*	● *state and acknowledge differences of opinion*
● *lecture*	● *state and ask for opinions and perceptions*
● *control*	● *direct/redirect as necessary in order to stay on track*
● *belittle*	● *convey respect*
● *react emotionally*	● *respond by modeling your pro-social skills*
● *align*	● *stay neutral and objective*
● *monopolize*	● *insure all offenders are participating*
● *support cliques*	● *support independent thinking*
● *give the answers*	● *create a process that encourages creative thinking*

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This list of do's and don'ts for group facilitators amounts to a real challenge. One of the hardest parts of the group process is the establishment of the right environment for self-discovery and change in a setting that has a tradition of mistrust, hostility, and resentment. If the facilitator can operate with some of the same characteristics of a "good coach" who challenges his players to pursue a goal, but at the same time understands their personal limitations because of the lack of knowledge and skill, he or she may come close to the approach necessary to be a competent and skilled facilitator.

Examples

In the next few pages, we will look at potential problem situations, and will illustrate a strategy that has worked in the past, with some situations and some groups. An underlying theme in these illustrations is the use of imagination. Staff should train themselves to be as creative as possible in their ways of coping with problem situations, always within the general guidelines aimed at respectful communication and self-directed change.

In this program it is as important to establish a "cooperative" group setting as it is to control group behavior. In this program we ask offenders to let us inside their heads, and this will not happen if there exists a rift because they are hostile and defiant in their thinking due to a perceived abuse of authority. As we go through these exercises, you will see that often (though not always) group behavior problems can be solved by setting clear limits while not presenting yourself as a "controlling authority" to the offender. The offender experiences his behavior and the related consequence as his choice. If the offender can see the problem and own responsibility for changing that behavior, this is the resolution we are after. If the offender is told what the problem is, what the consequences are and stops the behavior out of fear of those consequences, then we have compliance through control, not change through conscious choice.

Our strategy is to supervise for success, not wait to respond to failure.

> *Our strategy is to supervise for success, not wait to respond to failure.*

The sample situations described below are not intended as rigid formulas of how to respond to problem behavior. In fact, the intention is just the opposite. Within the principles of accountability, choice, and self-awareness which are basic to the program, staff should train themselves to use as much imagination as possible in responding to offender behavior.

Situation #1: Robert is not attending group.

Robert was assigned to a Phase I group and missed two groups out of the first five. Staff were told that he was sleeping during both of the groups that he missed.

Possible Solution – A staff member goes to see Robert in his cell. He begins the conversation by asking Robert how he's doing (Robert knew why the staff member was there and was already defensive, waiting for the hammer to fall). The staff member asks Robert why he has not been in group, making a point to convey concern rather than demanding an excuse. Regardless of his response, staff member asks Robert if he is coming to the next group (to get a commitment), and states objectively the group standards for attendance. Staff member does not leave with his last statement being something Robert perceives as just another rule for him to have to follow. Rather, the staff member does one simple thing that takes five seconds. He shakes hands with Robert and encourages to come to the next group. This gesture conveys the staff's personal support for Robert's success, while at the same time upholding the standards and expectations of the group.

Situation #2: John is being disruptive or defiant in group.

A group has been going on for thirty minutes and several times during the group John has been disruptive by talking in group while you and others were talking, interrupting people, disagreeing with everything that is being said, and trying to get other offenders to be disruptive along with him. It is clear that his behavior is intentional and deliberate.

Possible Solution – This is a frustrating situation. What we need to do is understand that this is a very complex situation. We need to stand back and look at what is going on and why, rather than reacting with emotions of frustration and anger.

It is quite possible that John is "grandstanding" to boost his ego, using the group as his forum to create conflict with staff to obtain status. If this is true and we follow our instincts to challenge his behavior with our authority, we feed into the game. It's a game we cannot win, but succeed only in creating a conflict that requires all of the group members to choose sides (usually we get left standing alone). Remember, we don't want to ostracize but rather get John to align with our purpose.

One of the ways to combat this defiance would be to defuse this individual by inviting him to explain or define the subject being discussed. Allow him to state his view in detail. In fact, request more detail and then thank him for his input. Don't worry about his statements being in conflict with the material that you are presenting. You most certainly are not the only one in the group that can see through his behavior.

Often when you give an offender in this situation what he wants, in this case attention, it works in your favor because the attention he wanted was from his peers for being negative and disruptive. You turned the tables by allowing him the floor without creating conflict. His audience will soon get tired of it, because the original interest was the conflict that he was creating with the staff.

If this does not reduce the problem, remove this offender from the energy of the group and talk to him about the problem one-on-one.

Situation #3: Tony challenges everything you present, often questioning everything that comes up in the group.

Possible Solution – This is a problem that may or may not be important, depending on the effect that Tony's skeptical behavior has on his ability to internalize or absorb the information being covered. If Tony's skeptical stance also causes him to screen out important information, his ability to do the program will be greatly hampered.

In group any time that anyone takes a skeptical stance, objectively point it out, not asking for agreement but just suggesting that the offender suspend judgment on the information. Tony needs to be able to see the destructiveness of what he is doing and the potential benefit of being more open to information. Given that Tony is very defensive (being skeptical is a defensive stance), talk to Tony and ask him to reflect on why he is so skeptical. Ask Tony to do a special project listing all the benefits of being open minded. Once he does this, review it with him supporting his list and making further suggestions of the potential benefits. Form an alliance with Tony on this project.

Situation #4: Jim is agreeing with everything.

Jim is being overly or falsely agreeable in order to avoid confrontation or to appear as if he is making progress. In other words, Jim is playing "possum". This is a special problem because this program requires truly honest self-examination. Jim may appear to be doing that, but in reality he owns very little, if any, of his cognitive distortions. In this situation the facilitator needs to be direct without being disrespectful. Staff might ask Jim, when he so willingly agrees with something, to tell the group why he agrees. Have him provide examples from his own life, but be careful not to embarrass him as a means of quieting him. Challenge him without embarrassing him. Don't help him by filling in the blanks for him. This situation may become one of the most common problems within the program, and needs continued attention.

In this case, don't take yes for an answer.

Situation #5: Gene is being disrespectful to other group members.

Possible Solution – This situation is one that requires immediate confrontation because Gene's behavior clearly violates a group rule and threatens the group process. However, it is still necessary to have Gene see and become responsible for this behavior without being threatening or controlling, and without arguing the issue. Staff could stop the group and restate the standard for respectful communications. Then have each offender in the group evaluate their individual communications skills in relation to the established standard. Have them evaluate their degree of respect for each of the other offenders in group. Then conduct a guided group discussion based on the importance of relating to each other respectfully regardless of personal dislikes.

If the behavior continues, confront it directly in the group being as objective and respectful as possible. If necessary, remove the offending member from the group, being careful to convey respect when you do it.

Situation #6: Dave and Brian are forming a private alliance.

Dave and Brian's alliance is hindering their individual progress and disrupting the effectiveness of the group.

Possible Solution – Our normal response to this situation is to separate Brian and Dave in any and all ways possible. This may work, but there is another solution that may work better. The key is to get the two of them into a situation where they must conflict or they at least cannot support each other. This can be done in many different ways as long as it requires the two to take opposing stances. Sometimes it can be as simple as having one talk about the other in the normal group process. You may need to go further by having the group split into two groups to spend the session debating an issue, while making sure that Dave and Brian are on opposing teams and directly respond to each other in opposition. Or meet with each one privately, and express your concerns about their progress being hindered because of their inability to participate in the group as an individual. At the same time, express your confidence that if they choose they could "stand on their own two feet."

Situation #7: Ed is not participating and is not paying attention.

Possible Solution – For the majority of offenders who do not participate or pay attention, they key is in the way that we run the groups. If we set up your group so that none of the participants know when they are going to be required to participate in the process, the majority of offenders will pay attention for fear of looking stupid or foolish when they get called upon. This seems quite simple but it isn't. Many facilitators get engaged in the process of the group and even in a small group of six or seven, a group member can hide for the whole group. It's too easy to call only on those group

members who like to participate, or those who respond or participate without being called upon. This encourages a facilitator to get in a groove and not pay attention to the group member who is on Mars. Sometimes participation issues have to be dealt with one-on-one. At times issues such as physical intimidation, fear of others in the group, personal conflicts, external events or emotional state may be the cause.

The situations outlined in the previous few pages are not designed to be universal answers, but as suggestions and guidelines to problem solving. The approach supports and promotes offender choice, and at the same time helps develop a cooperative relationship between facilitators and group members. This type of problem solving takes extra time, thought, and effort, but it leads to long term resolution vs. short term compliance. The nature of the relationship with the group and its members is often much more important than an individual problem. Being a group facilitator is especially challenging when you realize you are modeling effective conflict resolution to several sets of eyes which could not be more critical.

Some other group problems are not directly related to deliberately disruptive behavior, but are the result of delivery by the group facilitator. It is very hard for any facilitator to keep the group energy level up. Offenders often get bored because they are not fully engaged mentally and emotionally in the process, through no particular fault of the group members or the facilitator. Anything that can bring the energy level up, engage the offenders, and make the process exciting becomes welcome by all. Following is a list of suggestions and a brief description of each:

Role playing – Role playing is one of the most effective ways ever devised to get offenders involved and thinking in a group. Offenders (and staff) tend to resist role plays at first out of self-consciousness, but after a short time they enjoy and support the process.

Role plays are as simple as play acting any situation that you want to demonstrate, clarify, or study objectively. Be sure to participate in the process yourself to help offenders get over their fear of role playing. This tool can be used at any time or anywhere. The only limit is imagination. Any situation that is reviewed in a thinking report can also be the subject of a role play, with group members and staff playing any combination of roles.

Role reversals – One of the best ways to help develop empathy is to have the offenders play roles that are not normally their own. This is a form of role play in which you specify a role for the offender that is distinctly different from his normal role. The facilitator and an offender may switch roles in a specific situation. The offender not only experiences a new perspective, he watches his own role from the perspective of an observer.

Video use – One of the best treatment tools available today is the video camera. The power and effect that is possible by having the offender review himself on tape is very powerful. You can't hide from the camera. For this very reason, offenders as a whole are very fearful of

being on camera, but as with role playing after awhile they understand its usefulness and support the process. Staff, as always, need to create a supportive experience.

Images and metaphors – Diagrams and images that illustrate an idea or an experience are useful communication tools. Images, whether presented verbally (as metaphors) or as pictures can focus offender's attention more sharply than the use of literal language alone. Use of images encourages imagination.

The key to combating boredom in your groups is energy. Energy is only limited by imagination, and the fear of using it. If you think it might work, try it. Failing to try only ensures failure.

SECTION 5: *Environmental Barriers*

Barriers to Program Effectiveness

Many things can hinder a program's effectiveness. The physical environment and lack of physical resources are one common problem in prisons. Programs are often looked upon as a luxury, and hardly any institution can afford luxuries. However, prisons also embody deeply entrenched cultures and "ways of doing business" that are often in conflict with the methods and even the goals of treatment programs.

The Options program makes a conscious effort to address the attitudes and cultural forms of resistance common in most prisons. From the point of view of staff, the Options program does not set itself up as even slightly in conflict with the goals and procedures of basic correctional practice. The program does not conflict with security either in principle or in practice. Offenders are not excused from accountability in the Options program. Accountability for their behavior is an essential element of the program. From the point of view of offenders, the attitudes of resentment and resistance to authority, which pose powerful barriers to the effectiveness of any correctional program, are taken as the primary targets of attention in the Options program. The program strategy is directed toward achieving the cooperation of offenders who begin with just these hostile and resentful attitudes.

There is no such thing as an ideal correctional environment for the delivery of programs. Barriers will exist and, even with the best of beginnings, new barriers will develop. Prisons are complex institutions, performing a complex task. It is simply not realistic to assume that conditions for the delivery of a program will be, or will remain, ideal. Overcoming barriers is part of the job of delivering a correctional program.

> *There is no such thing as an ideal correctional environment for the delivery of programs. Barriers will exist.*

We have divided barriers to program effectiveness into two categories—environment and attitudinal. Some circumstances fall into both categories. A negative inmate culture and negative peer pressure toward the program may be an element of the social environment, but it is made up of a set of attitudes.

The best treatment program in the world will not be effective if it is allowed to be overwhelmed by the attitudinal and environmental barriers that are always present, or are likely to become present, in correctional institutions. Addressing these barriers is not only essential to the success of the program, it can also have the additional benefit of improving the overall effectiveness of an institution.

In the next few pages, we will review some of the potential barriers that may exist in your institutional environment. We have broken the barriers into three areas: staff attitudes and behaviors, offender attitudes and behaviors, and environmental factors. The discussion is not complete. The only sure prediction in implementing a correctional program is that you will be faced with barriers you did not anticipate at all. For this reason we encourage a "problem

solving" attitude from the beginning. The following discussion is intended to foster that attitude.

Staff Attitudes and Behaviors

Staff attitudes and behaviors can pose a significant barrier to any correctional program. This is especially true if staff perceive a program as embodying different principles, ideas, and values than they have learned to apply in their own correctional roles. They may see a program as an unwelcome interference in their primary role of maintaining security. Or they may perceive a program's philosophy as a challenge to their own basic principles and a threat to their professional status. These perceptions may be based on either fact or misunderstanding, depending on the program, the institution, and the individual staff member. It is the program staff's responsibility to communicate the methods and meaning of the program in such a way that is seen as an enhancement of correctional values and methods, not as a threat to them.

It is important to approach the issue of staff perceptions and attitudes with caution and respect. We are all correctional staff. We need to be sympathetic to staff needs by coaching for change, rather than demanding it. Adversarial conflict will assure that both parties lose. The examples of staff attitudes which follow are not assumed to be typical. In better institutions, very few staff may have such attitudes, but they represent a risk unique to corrections, and a potential barrier to the effectiveness of the program. The point is to be watchful for such attitudes and develop more constructive and more professional alternatives.

Punitive Attitudes – Some staff working in correctional environments feel that it is their job to punish the offender, to make his period of incarceration as unpleasant as possible. Sometimes this attitude comes across as righteous judgments (both consciously and subconsciously) that are projected through attitudes, verbal communications or overt behavior. In a sense this attitude is very natural. We judge the offender as a person based on his criminal behavior, we classify him as an inmate, and put him in a role in which it is no longer necessary to treat him with respect or human compassion. Many inmates treat staff with overt contempt, and staff need some means of defending against this. Some staff have the personal belief that what an offender needs is more discipline. In a correctional environment this may become a series of "deserved" punishments. A staff member may fall into the mode of judge, jury, and executioner. In such an environment, cooperative communication with offenders is impossible. The offender sees correctional staff as the enemy, the people he needs to hide from and lie to. When staff encourage this perception by their own attitudes toward inmates, we lock ourselves into a hopeless cycle of resentment and hostility. Programs for change cannot flourish in such an environment.

We need to teach staff attitudes directed toward long term change, rather than short term control.

Control Attitudes – This staff attitude is close to the punitive attitude, but has a different implication. Our job in corrections is to control inmates. By definition, we impose this control against their will. This fundamental aspect of our jobs creates a special "occupational hazard". We face the risk of letting our controlling role so dominate our relationship with inmates that we exclude all elements of inmate choice and self-initiative. Forced compliance can leave no room for learning responsibility.

With enough external control we can force compliance to whatever standard of behavior we wish to set. It is easy to mistake control and compliance for change. We fail to see (or see the significance of) the hostility and resentment under the surface that is festering for another day. There are hundreds of stories in corrections of "model inmates" who, when released, turned almost immediately to terrible acts of violence. These offenders typically report months and years of festering resentment. They interpret prison control as a personal humiliation. Unable to do anything but accept it while they were incarcerated, their resentment grows into an overwhelming righteous anger. Some inmates learn to live and thrive on their righteous resentment and hatred of authority. In some cases, staff may begin to thrive on control, abusing their authority in order to develop their own sense of power. These staff may form groups or cliques, or they may be isolated individuals. If one staff in a hundred operates with this kind of attitude, hundreds of inmates are likely to use that example to "prove" their belief that correctional staff are no better than the worst inmates.

Lack of Trust – In most correctional environments, trust between staff and offenders is very limited. Staff may see trust of inmates as a weakness, believing that if you trust an offender, he will take advantage of you. This belief is grounded in facts, but an attitude of distrust can become so automatic and inclusive that we exclude even the opportunity of responsible inmate behavior. Total distrust does not permit meaningful cooperation. Total distrust comes across to the offender as "the bad stepfather"—there's just no pleasing him. This results in an excuse to give up. Staff need to practice and nurture an attitude of "suspended judgment". Such an attitude is compatible with staying alert to inmate irresponsibility and at the same time conveys personal support and encouragement for change.

Believing Offenders are Hopeless – Often we, as correctional staff, see offenders or groups of offenders as "hopeless", beyond the ability to ever become productive members of society. This stance becomes destructive in two ways. The first being that offenders can read us very well and if the attitude that we are projecting is "you are hopeless", the offenders' motivation and willingness go through the painful process of change is limited at best. They will not be able to see us as partners in their project of change. The second problem is that it affects our own motivation. Our drive or commitment will be limited if we believe offenders are hopeless. The attitude itself becomes cancerous, often spreading throughout one's thinking until everything about the job seems hopeless. This is often the direct cause of staff "burnout". Staff may be able to see only the failures, the futility rather than any of the successes. Luckily the opposite is also true. With effort staff can adopt the attitude that anything is possible, at the same time not setting up unrealistic hopes and expectations.

Not My Job – Often we as staff tend to focus on our own job or task at hand rather than looking at the big picture or the overall mission of the institution. If the yard officer does not accept responsibility for the effect that his relations with offenders have, but believes that is someone else's job to relate respectfully, than this person becomes a barrier to the environment of cooperation necessary for the change process. If the relationship is one of disrespect or disregard, then we fall back in the "us *vs* them" mode. If working with offenders in a productive and meaningful way to support and challenge offenders to change is only for "treatment staff", than you might as well bring a squirt gun to a forest fire; the effect will be the same. No program by itself can overcome the effect of a totally negative institutional environment. We all need to define our roles as parts of a single task. We need to practice speaking to offenders with one essential message, and one voice.

Lack of Understanding – Change is a difficult and challenging process. Offenders must abandon some of their deepest attitudes which are in some cases their only source of self-pride and self-esteem. For staff to be credible with offenders, we must have a genuine appreciation of what they are up against in the process of change.

Staff may assume the process of change is simply a matter of seeing a problem, wanting to change, and changing. Often, because we see it so simply, we become impatient with offenders who see the problems but are not changing. Often we mistake this as playing a game or lack of sincerity on the part of the offender, when it really may represent small increments of change. Or a specific barrier may exist that needs to be overcome in order for the offender to progress any further. Staff must remember that we are asking offenders to change their whole antisocial cognitive structure. For a lot of offenders this represents a "disarming" that is very frightening. They may feel very weak and vulnerable in the face of change. When staff fail to appreciate this (failing to see the scope of the problem) and become judgmental or critical, the offender takes this as betrayal and becomes fortified with defenses in order to escape the vulnerable state.

One way to learn to appreciate the nature of self-change is to practice it on yourself. (In fact, all staff in the Options program should practice cognitive self-change as part of their preparation for delivering the program. One suggestion: for 24 hours, practice not criticizing others, either overtly or in your mind. It is surprising how deeply into our sense of self some seemingly simple habits can be.)

Offender Attitudes and Behaviors

Lack of Trust – Offenders also have serious issues with their inability to trust. Usually, by the time an offender reaches the point of incarceration, he has built serious barriers or mindsets about "the system". One of the biggest mindsets is a total distrust for correctional staff because they are a part of the system. Very often offenders see correctional staff as the "enemy", and from this point of view, it is easy to understand the logic for their distrust. Offenders may use their lack of trust as a crutch, or excuse to escape from responsibility. For example, an offender may not elect to get involved in a treatment program, stating that the

reason is that he can't trust the staff running it. This may mask other reasons, such as lack of motivation, fear of what his peers may think, fear of being vulnerable, etc. Even after they become involved in the program, trust remains a serious issue. The program requires a high level of disclosure and lack of trust can hinder this greatly. We, as human beings, use the process of distrusting as a defense in order to protect us from other people and the cruel world. Often the defense becomes so complete, we cripple our ability to relate to each other on a meaningful personal level.

Development of trust requires time and effort.   It is not bought by compromising accountability or indulging offenders' irresponsible thinking patterns. It is earned by honest and straightforward communication.

Resentment of Authority – For many offenders, authority is a bad word. Where pro-social people usually see authority as setting reasonable limits to live by, the offender sees authority as trying to control his life. This sets up a righteous stance that builds in power or strength with every encounter with authority.   Corrections, by definition, provides practically continuous encounters with authority. This is one reason that corrections is so often counter-productive, producing "graduates" who are more antisocial when they leave than when they entered. Defiance of authority may take the form of defiance or resistance to the program, and the staff who are delivering it. This can represent a serious barrier, both with the individual offender and the program group. A negative peer culture can overturn the best efforts of staff.

The basic strategy for overcoming resistance to authority is described in Section 2---Principles of Intervention and Communication. Authority must always be presented as impersonal, not as a personal struggle for power and control.

Fear of Fear – Offenders often tend to be fearful of almost everything. They may mask this fear with aggressive or destructive emotions. Offenders tend to believe that any display of fear is a sign of weakness and showing it will expose their vulnerability. Any emotion that can be seen as "being weak" or "showing fear" is emotionally frightening and demands an immediate reaction such as hostility, anger, or even apathy---any kind of emotion that allows the offender to take back control or power over the situation. In treatment this presents a unique barrier because we are asking the offender to disclose his inner most thoughts and feelings that are at the heart of his fears. This makes the treatment process a very fearful and threatening process for offenders, and because of this, staff must walk a fine line of support and challenge, to move offenders toward facing these fears.

Image – One of the barriers hardest to break in a correctional environment is "image" or issues around "status" and "reputation". Most offenders attempt to develop a reputation in a correctional environment in order to belong to a group, to build confidence, or to protect themselves. Their image allows them to create a perceived safety barrier, protecting him from attack physically, verbally, or emotionally from other offenders. Image defines their power position in the "convict" hierarchy. This barrier becomes a serious problem because offenders may not permit themselves to "be themselves", but must be true to their image instead.

The basic communication strategies of the Options program can help overcome this barrier. Patience and persistence, together with focused journal projects aimed at this specific barrier, are our basic tools.

Beliefs – Offenders possess a great many personal beliefs that create major barriers or walls of defense to protect their cognitive distortions. Beliefs may pose barriers to change at any stage of the program, from initial entry to the end of Phase III. Such beliefs may need to be dealt with before the offender will begin to seriously involve himself in the program.

Some of the beliefs that offenders may have are: "nothing's wrong with me", "asking anyone for help is a sign of weakness", "you can't trust a cop", "it's hopeless anyway", "I've got to fend for myself", "I am number one", "if you let someone see the real you they will exploit it", "I can change myself without help", "no one will ever give me a change anyway", "if I'm honest with them they will never let me out of jail", "no one's going to break me", "don't give them anything they can use".

This list represents only a few of the beliefs that can disable the effectiveness of the program. One offender may hold to all of these beliefs. For this reason it will take a lot of patience, time, and commitment on the part of the program staff to wade through these beliefs in order to work meaningfully with the offender. It is a major step forward to get offenders to state their beliefs in words, and begin to objectively examine them in terms of their consequences. This should be a basic part of the thinking report and journal process.

Lack of Motivation and Commitment – If offenders were genuinely motivated to be responsible, they would not be offenders. Offenders tend to avoid making efforts toward things that have no immediate payoff, gratification or reward. They tend to drop the ball quickly, having developed little to no internal motivation. In the beginning stages of the program, their motivation is likely to be external; they will take the program because it is required. The internal and more real motivation usually does not occur until the offender has developed an awareness of his real problems and the scope of those problems. It is crucial for program staff to push, support, challenge, and guide the offenders all of the time in the early stages of the program. Offenders will need continued support all through the program process because their level of commitment will go up and down from week to week or even day to day. Staff and offender need to be aware that the process of change is a long journey with a lot of pitfalls along the way. The offenders who do make the journey understand this, taking one step at a time, and taking gratification for each step rather than being overwhelmed by the journey ahead.

The basic strategy for developing offender motivation is described in Section 2. We must first make them aware, and then make them choose. We must do this while holding them accountable and responsible for everything they do, and at the same time conveying personal support for their project of change. Once again, this is the essential art of program communication and program delivery.

Inmate Culture – In any correctional environment there exists both a staff culture and an inmate culture—i.e., networks of socially supported attitudes and behaviors. Issues of staff culture are discussed above, under "staff attitudes and behaviors". Inmate culture is typically based on rejection of authority and conventional social norms. It is an outlaw culture and it may be enforced by threat of physical harm or even death. Very often the norms of inmate culture conflict with program standards, creating a barrier hindering program participation or progress. Program staff need to make very careful judgments about what they can realistically expect and enforce in opposition to these inmate norms. On the one hand, to deliver a correctional program in an institution is to confront these antisocial norms. This is a legitimate and necessary program goal. On the other hand, inmate culture has a power that no program can make to simply disappear. It is not wise to demand behaviors (such as confrontation of other inmates in group) which might create a reaction against the program member beyond the ability of the program to control.

Other Environmental Barriers

Physical Plant – Often, the physical plant of correctional settings are not the best to support program need. The physical setting can hinder the functional operations of the program. Units and program spaces may be too large, too crowded, too small, have too many interruptions due to security functions or facility movement, have poor lighting, etc. The environment may not provide for security precautions against introduction of drugs or contraband. It may lack direct supervision, or lack any number of other resources.

It is wise and sometimes essential not to set our minds too rigidly on the conditions we think are "necessary" to the delivery of the program.

Time Restrictions – Staff may not have enough time to spend with each offender for journal reviews. Staff may not have enough time to conduct the full range of program activities. Offenders may have too much time to serve. Conflicts in scheduling between programs, work, education, and recreation may arise.

It becomes important for program staff to manage their time by prioritizing their workload to maximize productivity. The bottom line is that most of the time there is not enough hours a day to do everything when you are working in a program environment.

Again, this is an issue of careful staff judgment. We need to determine a minimum standard of program delivery, and not be willing to compromise these standards in the name of expediency. On the other hand, we will inevitably need to be both flexible and imaginative in solving barriers posed by lack of time.

Administrative Support – One of the biggest potential long-term barriers is the lack of administrative support. When a program begins, there is often strong administrative support (without it the program would not even exist), but as time goes by and money gets tight, the first thing cut is program dollars. Program funding is often seen as "fat". The program may

last well beyond the administration that it started under, and the new administration may not support the program at the same level as the original administration. It becomes very important for the program staff to actively involve administrative staff in the concept and operations of the program. Administration must own the program as an essential, mainstream operation.

Summary

Many barriers to program effectiveness exist other than the ones stated in this chapter. What is important is not to anticipate each and every barrier, but to develop an attitude and strategy for coping with barriers, wherever and however they appear. If we look at barriers as burden's or problems, it becomes easy to become overwhelmed, stressed, and burned out. If we can look at the barriers that we face as challenges to overcome and as opportunities to learn and grow, then we can to some extent welcome barriers, rather than dread them. The key is to get good at dealing with them. Often, in a correctional environment, this difference represents the difference between those staff that are happy and enjoy their jobs, and those that hate their jobs and struggle going to work every day.

The bottom line is that barriers will always exist in a correctional environment. That is a given. We can train ourselves to recognize these barriers, accept them as a challenge, and maintain a positive attitude in dealing with them. Our choice comes down to taking a role of breaking down barriers, or becoming a barrier ourselves.

SECTION 6: *Organizational Management*

Organizational Management

Clinical Supervision

Each program must create its own system of clinical supervision. The following observations are intended as broad guidelines rather than specific prescriptions.

Clinical supervision of staff is an integral part of delivering the program. It is not an "add on". Clinical supervision should include two major processes: 1) daily peer review by staff of routine program processes and activities, and 2) formal and structured review by program managers.

A form of peer review was described in Section 2. This is the "process review" conducted by staff facilitators after each treatment group. A focused process review is the most powerful technique we have for developing staff expertise and improving the effectiveness of the program. It will prevent complacency and "institutionalization" of the program. However, it takes a deliberate effort and expenditure of time and energy that we may not believe is available.

It is recommended that every treatment group include a minimum of 30 minutes for staff process review. This is in addition to time required to prepare the group beforehand, and time to document the group afterwards. Staff schedules need to include process review time, and program managers need to hold staff accountable for using this time as it is intended.

A process review is a structured review of important events, statements, behaviors, and interactions that occurred in the group just completed. The guideline for the review is nothing more and nothing less than the principles of program communication and the objectives of the specific group. The goal of the process review is to sharpen staff's awareness of what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how well they are succeeding.

Even though the process review is, by definition, a peer review process, program managers must be responsible for assuring that they are performed effectively. Other forms of peer review can be included as part of routine staff meetings, or as informal communications between staff. Managers should actively develop a "staff culture" of critical evaluation and communication. This demands a strongly supportive environment. It will not work if the process becomes threatening or punitive.

Formal reviews should be conducted by program managers. These can be integrated into the informal peer review processes, but should include definition of specific areas of desirable staff development. For instance, a program manager should both observe and take part in treatment groups, and then take part in the process review that follows. They should do this routinely enough to be certain they understand what is happening in all of the program processes, and the strengths and weaknesses of all program staff. Managers will need to

create a system of feedback to staff that is challenging enough to stimulate learning and growth, and supportive enough to avoid creating defensiveness.

In short, managers must manage. The program will not run itself, no matter how talented and committed a staff with which the program begins.

Treatment Team Reviews

The treatment team is defined as the collection of program staff who have responsibility for the treatment of a given offender. The make up of the treatment ream may, therefore, vary from one offender to the other. Supervisory staff are always members of the treatment team. The team should include staff who facilitate groups and monitor individual journal projects, as well as security staff who have significant contact with the offender.

The treatment team is the rudder of the ship, steering the process of offender change. It provides direction and definition, personal support, and upholds program standards. It monitors offender performance and evaluates both effort and progress. When it is necessary to remove an offender from the program, that decision lies with the treatment team.

Treatment team reviews are scheduled as a regular part of the program. Each offender should be reviewed at least monthly (for programs lasting up to six months), and every three months for longer programs. In addition to scheduled reviews, treatment teams should be called for special issues such as individual behavior problems, to motivate an offender who is stagnant, to prepare an offender for the next phase of the program, and for transition out of the program. Treatment team reviews demonstrate to the offender---and to ourselves---that we are paying attention and that we care.

Treatment teams can be the most focused and impactful communication that we have between the program and an offender. Treatment teams embody all of the program's basic strategies of communication (see Section 2). This means being straightforward rather than manipulative. Offenders need to see the program as "laying its cards on the table". Treatment teams are our best opportunity to define the meaning of the program in the mind of each offender. They are our most explicit vehicle for achieving the goal of cooperation.

Each treatment team review should be prepared in advance and reviewed afterward, by all staff involved. Documentation should include a statement of the purpose of the review, a summary of the content as presented, and a description of directions defined for the future.

Program Evaluation

The program must include mechanisms for evaluating itself. In addition to supervision systems described above, we need to provide quantitative measures of outcome.

If possible, a system should be designed for comparing the future criminal behavior (recidivism) of program graduates with similar offenders who do not graduate from the

program. Such "control group" studies are difficult to achieve in corrections. At the very least, we need to keep complete records of program participants, their characteristics, their treatment performance, and outcome in terms of their long term behavior. If such records are kept routinely for all offenders in an institution, we can eventually distinguish the effect of the program on offender behavior.

In any outcome evaluation it is important not to interpret the meaning of the results too soon. Favorable seeming outcomes may reflect a variety of hidden factors that make the program seem more effective than it is in reality. Unfavorable seeming outcomes may reflect factors of offender selection (the program may take the highest risk offenders to begin with) that make the program seem less effective when it is effective. In any case, truly dramatic outcomes are not realistic. The best correctional programs reduce recidivism on the order of 10 to 50 percent. We need to adjust our expectations toward marginal reduction of risk, and away from categorical cures.

Documentation and Forms

Minimal documentation should include:

An individual treatment record for each offender that includes:

- Personal data: dates of entry, personal history, demographic data

- A record of each treatment team review

- Periodic summaries of progress (in conjunction with treatment team reviews)

- Brief records of each journal review

- Copies of all thinking reports and journal projects

- A summary of each group meeting

APPENDIX:

GLOSSARY

COGNITIVE---Refers to thoughts or the process of thinking.

COGNITIVE CHANGE---Changing thoughts or patterns of thinking.

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING---Changing attitudes, beliefs and thinking patterns that are elements of an individual's cognitive structure.

COGNITIVE SKILLS---Ability to think, especially in coping with situations encountered in life.

COGNITIVE STRUCTURE---Enduring and habitual cognitive patterns, including attitudes, beliefs and thinking patterns, which regulate the way an individual experiences events, other people, and himself.

CRIMINOGENIC---A circumstance that produces crime or criminal behavior.

INTERVENTION---A conscious and deliberate act designed to interrupt or redirect a behavior or thinking pattern that has been targeted for change.

JOURNAL---A daily record of experiences focused on a specific target in the process of cognitive change.

RELAPSE---Returning to an old habit of behavior after having stopped or interrupted that behavior.

RELAPSE PREVENTION---A systematic strategy for anticipating risks of relapse, minimizing those risks, and practicing alternative coping behaviors.

RELAPSE PREVENTION CONTRACT---A contract composed by an offender in collaboration with his treatment team which outlines his risks and plans for controlling those risks.

RISK FACTOR---A circumstance (including ways of thinking) that increases the probability of an undesirable outcome or behavior.

RISK MANAGEMENT---A systematic strategy of reducing risk of relapse by controlling risk factors.

SELF-RISK MANAGEMENT---Management of criminal relapse by the offender himself, as opposed to management of risk by external supervision.

THINKING ERROR---A habitual thought or way of thinking that distorts the facts or severely limits an individual's way of coping with situations.

THINKING REPORT---A technique for observing and reporting the content of one's thinking.

TREATMENT TEAM---A group of staff involved in the treatment of an offender, who meet to plan and review that treatment. In this program, the treatment team includes the offender.

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