

Integrated Mental Health Care: Falloon IRH & OTP

ALTERNATIVES TO DRUGS & ALCOHOL FOR SOLVING OUR PROBLEMS



Ballarat**Health**Services

*Produced by Ballarat Health Services,
Psychiatric Services*

***HOW TO FIND BETTER
ALTERNATIVES TO
USING
DRUGS AND ALCOHOL
TO SOLVE OUR
PROBLEMS***

***I: The good, the bad and
the ugly***



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Taking Drugs To Enhance Everyday Life

Most people use some sort of drugs every day. Tea, coffee, cocoa, cigarettes, wine and beer are all substances that have special effects on our nervous systems that many people find pleasant and help them to cope with some of their everyday problems and stresses. Some of this drug-taking behaviour becomes a habit, and we are not aware of the effects on our bodies, so that in order to get any special benefits we may have to take higher amounts than usual. For example if we feel tired we may drink several cups of tea or coffee to make ourselves feel more alert, or if we are very tense at a formal dinner we may drink more wine or beer to help us relax. All these drugs are sold in our shops, at least to adults, and are considered safe if taken in small amounts.

WHAT DRUGS DO WE TAKE ON AN EVERY DAY BASIS?

WHAT BENEFITS DO WE NOTICE?

WHAT UNWANTED EFFECTS DO WE NOTICE?

Drug taken

Benefits

Unwanted Effects

Illegal Drugs

As well as drugs that we can buy in shops in most countries, there are other drugs that are sold by people illegally. These drugs usually have stronger effects, especially when we first try them. The common illegal drugs are:

- **Marijuana, Cannabis, THC, Hashish**
 - **Ecstasy**
- **Amphetamines, Speed**
 - **Cocaine, Crack**
- **Barbiturates, Seconal, Valium, Librium**
 - **Heroin, Morphine, Codeine**
- **LSD, PCP or Angel Dust, Magic Mushrooms**

We will have noticed that some of the drugs on this list can be obtained legally from a doctor. However, doctors provide these drugs only for treatment of special symptoms. Strong alcohol, such as spirits, should probably be included in this list as well, because many people use this form of alcohol for the more powerful effect that it has than beer or wine.

WHICH OF THESE DRUGS HAVE WE EVER TAKEN?

WHAT BENEFITS DID WE NOTICE?

WHAT UNWANTED EFFECTS DID WE NOTICE?

Drug taken

Benefits

Unwanted Effects

We can see that taking drugs that are not recommended by our doctors has benefits, but there are usually some disadvantages. As well as the direct effects the drugs have on us, there are other reasons why we like to take them, and there are other disadvantages, particularly when we must break the law to take them. Some other advantages of taking drugs are:

- | |
|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">ADVANTAGES OF TAKING DRUGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• having a group of friends• feeling like a member of a special club<ul style="list-style-type: none">• doing something exciting• not being considered mentally ill• avoiding & coping with stresses• helping problems like shyness, sleep or feeling sad• helping with unwanted effects of medicines |
|---|

WHICH OF THESE GOALS AND PROBLEMS DO WE FIND DRUGS HELP?

Unfortunately, there are added disadvantages from taking these sorts of drugs. Some of these are:

- | |
|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">ADDED DISADVANTAGES OF DRUGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• high cost• stealing to obtain money<ul style="list-style-type: none">• problems with the law• threats & violence• danger of driving or operating machinery<ul style="list-style-type: none">• difficulty keeping jobs• unpredictable side effects• serious health problems and death<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sex & relationship problems• difficulty stopping |
|---|

WHAT ADDED DISADVANTAGES HAVE WE EXPERIENCED FROM USING DRUGS?

What are the good things we have noticed from using drugs?	What are some of the things we have found not so good about using drugs?
What are some of the things we would miss if we stopped using drugs?	What are some of the things we would miss if we stopped using drugs?

Review Personal Goals

Let's look at our Personal Goals for a moment:

How does our current use of drugs or alcohol assist or hinder these goals?

Are We Ready To Try To Give Up The Benefits We Get From Drugs And Alcohol?

It is important that we make a decision about whether we are ready to make some major changes in our lives and face all the problems that we may have living without drugs or alcohol.

Before our next meeting we can read this section again and decide if we are ready to face this difficult challenge.

***HOW TO FIND BETTER
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II: Ready, Steady, Go!



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Facing the Challenge: Are We Ready?

In our last discussions we looked at the pros and cons of using drugs or alcohol to improve our lives. It is clear that most people go through stages in our desire to change our use of substances that are often helpful, but also sometimes harmful. For example after a health scare such as an accidental overdose we may be quite clear that we must give up heroin. If we start to hear unpleasant voices when we smoke cannabis this may frighten us into stopping using this substance. Experiences like this may lead to deciding to give up using for good, or they may only last until the next party.

WHAT ARE OUR THOUGHTS ABOUT GIVING UP USING SUBSTANCES AT THIS MOMENT?

Some of us may still not be very clear where we stand. It may be useful for us to consider where we fit on this list:

- *The happy user.* We can see no serious problems with drug use and we want to continue using without making any changes.
- *In two minds.* We are thinking about changing. We realise that there are problems if we continue to use substances, or we are finding that the substances are not giving us the benefits we hoped for. BUT we still enjoy using them.
- *Get ready, get set.....*We have decided to face the challenge, but we haven't made any actual plans or started doing anything about it yet.
- *GO!!!!* We have already begun to make some changes and plans. Perhaps we have tried to cut down our use or avoided meeting friends or going to places where we may be encouraged to use substances.
- *Keeping on keeping off.* We have kept off substances for some time now and we are beginning to make the changes in our lives that help us resist the temptation to use the substances we depended on before.
- *Fallen off the wagon?* We have stopped using substances for sometime now but recently have begun to use a little (a 'lapse' or 'slip') or a lot ('relapse').

(*Adapted from Prochaska and DiClemente, 1982)



WHAT STAGE ARE WE AT NOW?

WHAT STAGE WOULD WE LIKE TO BE AT?

Summary:

Let's look over the information about our ideas about substance use and answer the following questions.

WHAT WILL BE OUR NEXT (FIRST) STEP NOW?

WHAT WILL WE DO IN THE NEXT ONE OR TWO DAYS (WEEK)

**HAVE WE ALREADY BEEN DOING THINGS TO ACHIEVE THIS?
COULD WE BE DOING MORE OF THESE THINGS?**

WHO COULD HELP US WITH THIS?

**ON A SCALE OF 1-10 HOW CONFIDENT DO WE FEEL ABOUT
MAKING THIS NEXT STEP?**

What Should I do if I am Still in Two Minds about Quitting or Continuing?

Deciding to stop doing something that has given us a lot of pleasure at times and some pain or stress at others is very difficult. Before our next meeting it may help to look over the program we have discussed so far, as well as some of the future modules. This may help us to make a decision one way or the other. Nobody else can make this decision for us, but it is important that we are clear what the likely benefits and what are the problems that we will have to face if we decide to try to find alternatives to alcohol or drugs to solve our problems and achieve our life goals.

Keeping a Diary of our Substance Use

Making a record of our use of substances may help us clarify the role that they play in our lives. On the next page there is a copy of the weekly ***Food, Drink and Drugs*** chart. Each time we take an alcoholic drink or any drug, (including those that our doctor may have prescribed for us) we can make a simple note of that in the box that approximates the time when we took that substance.

We will look over these diaries at our next meeting and discuss about any points that may help us understand our habits better. This will help us make clear plans to find alternatives to substances to deal with our problems and achieve our personal goals. But if we decide that it is best to continue using substances we may find it helpful to find ways to minimise any problems that arise from this activity (see module ***Minimising Harm for Happy Users***).

DO WE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE PLANS?

***HOW TO FIND BETTER
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***III: Minimising Harm for
Happy Users***



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Minimising Harm for Happy Users

If we have decided that at least for the moment we want to continue using drugs or alcohol we can make plans to deal with any problems that might arise.

POSSIBLE PROBLEMS

- high cost
- getting supplies of good quality
- stealing, fraud or prostitution obtain money
 - problems with the law
 - threats & violence
- danger of driving or operating machinery
 - difficulty keeping jobs
 - unpredictable side effects
 - overdoses
- problems with medicines from doctors
- serious health problems and death
- trigger symptoms of mental illnesses
 - sex & relationship problems
 - difficulty stopping

WHAT PROBLEMS DO YOU HAVE WITH THE SUBSTANCES YOU USE?

Problem Analysis

From our discussions we can see that there are several problems to solve. At this stage it may be best to make a list of those that we think are most important to deal with first. These may be the ones that we can do something about quite easily, and that seems likely to make a big difference to our overall enjoyment of life.

WHAT PROBLEM DO WE THINK ARE BEST TO DEAL WITH FIRST?

In order to get a better idea about the things that make these problems better or worse, our Instructor will ask X_____ some questions about it using the ***Problem Analysis Worksheet***. This will take 15-20 minutes. We can all stay and listen, but we may have other things that we would rather be doing at this time.

Feedback to all group members

(after the Problem Analysis worksheet has been filled in and key points noted on the list below)

We have had a good discussion about the problem that X_____ has been having. Some of the points that we felt were particularly helpful in thinking of ways to solve this problem were:

Are there any other points that we would like to add to these?

Problem Solving: A Plan to Manage the First Problem

Now let's use the ***Problem Solving and Goal Achievement Worksheet*** to develop a plan to solve the problem _____.

We will keep to our usual arrangements for your Resource Group Meetings, with our usual Chairperson and Secretary. Our Instructor will only suggest solutions that have been shown to be very helpful in dealing with this sort of problem in similar circumstances, especially when those ideas have been supported by good research.

If we have decided that there are several important problems that need to be tackled, we may need to carry out separate problem solving discussions for each problem issue.

Learning More about the Substances we Use

Most of the information we have about drugs and alcohol comes from our friends or family. Some of this information is correct, but much is not. If we are planning to use these substances for a long time it may be very helpful to have a clear understanding about their effects so that we can minimize many problems. First let's see how much we understand about the substances we use:

WHAT ARE THE SUBSTANCES CALLED?

- A) *ON THE STREET:* _____
- B) *REAL NAMES:* _____

WHAT EFFECTS DO THEY HAVE?

- A) *IN THE HOURS AFTER WE TAKE THEM:* _____
- B) *AFTER MONTHS OR YEARS OF USE:* _____

WHAT IS MEANT BY "TOLERANCE" TO A SUBSTANCE?

WHAT IS "DEPENDENCE" ON A SUBSTANCE?

WHAT IS AN OVERDOSE?

WHAT ARE THE SAFEST WAYS TO USE THESE SUBSTANCES?

WHAT EFFECTS ARE THERE FROM TAKING THESE SUBSTANCES TOGETHER?

**HOW DO THESE SUBSTANCES EFFECT ANY MEDICINES WE ARE TAKING, OR
MIGHT TAKE?**

**HOW DO THESE SUBSTANCES EFFECT ANY PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISORDERS WE
MY HAVE?**

Our Instructor will check our answers to these questions and help us to understand more about the substances we use. He or she may be able to give us some brochures to read more about the specific drugs and alcohol we use.

Making a Plan for Continued Use of Substances that Reduces their Risks

Now we can write a plan for how we will continue using drugs or alcohol on the worksheet on the next page:

MY PLAN FOR CONTINUING USE OF ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUGS

NAME _____

DATE _____

MY PERSONAL GOALS

SUBSTANCES AND DOSES

PLANS FOR OBTAINING SUPPLIES, FINANCES, BUDGETING, ETC

PLANS TO MINIMISE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH RISKS

PLANS TO MINIMISE RISK OF USE AT WORK

PLANS TO MINIMISE RISK WHEN DRIVING OR OPERATING EQUIPMENT

PLAN TO DEAL WITH LEGAL PROBLEMS, CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

PLAN TO DEAL WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDSHIP PROBLEMS (see also HOUSE RULES)

Keeping a Substance Use Diary

It is a good idea to make a daily record of our drug and alcohol use with the ***Food, Drink and Drugs Diary***.

This may help us plan our substance use in a way that minimises problems. We will review this at the beginning of our next meeting. We will also check how your plans to deal with the problems we have discussed are working. If there are difficulties with the plans we have made we might be able to find better solutions.

**DO WE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT OVERCOMING OUR PROBLEMS WITH
CONTINUED SUBSTANCE USE?**

***HOW TO FIND BETTER
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***IV: Stopping Using
Without Distress***



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REVIEW OF SUBSTANCE USE RECORD

First let us look at the notes we have made about our substance use on the *Food, Drink and Drug diaries* that we have completed.

**CAN WE SEE ANY PATTERNS IN THE TIMES
WHEN WE USE SUBSTANCES?**

**WAS THE AMOUNT OF SUBSTANCES WE HAVE USED MORE, LESS OR THE SAME
AS WE THOUGHT?**

DID KEEPING THE DIARY HAVE ANY EFFECT ON OUR SUBSTANCE USE??

**HAVE WE HAD ANY FURTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT POSSIBLE PROBLEMS WE
MIGHT HAVE IN CHANGING OUR SUBSTANCE USE?**

In this meeting we will discuss some of the special problems we may have when we try to stop using substances. Then we will decide which ones are most important for each of us and make specific plans to cope with them in later sessions (using the *Problem Analysis* and *Problem Solving worksheets* as guides).

SPECIAL PROBLEMS PEOPLE HAVE WITH ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Stopping taking a drug without distress

One of the most difficult things that we can do is to stop taking a drug that we have been taking regularly. One reason for this is that our body becomes used to having the drug on a regular basis. When we do not take it regularly our body reacts in the same way if we do not eat anything for a whole day or more. We get a feeling of intense hunger for the drug.

As well as having to cope with the way our body reacts to not having the drug regularly we may have to change our social habits as well. Our use of drugs often involves friends and our social activities. So that giving up the drug may need big changes in our life style. In addition, the people who make a living selling drugs will also suffer if we all stop buying their products, and so they will want to sabotage our plans to stop.

We will consider several steps in the plan to stop taking drugs:

STOPPING DRUGS SUCCESSFULLY

- reducing dose slowly
- coping with cravings
- refusing drugs from friends
- refusing drugs from sellers
- finding satisfying activities
- setting realistic goals & rewards for efforts

a) Reducing the dose slowly

Some people can stop taking drugs immediately, particularly if they can have intensive medical and social support to help them cope with any unpleasant effects that they may suffer. But, most people find it easier to reduce drugs one step at a time and avoid most of the distressing effects.

There is no simple formula for this, but it is recommended that we do not reduce our drugs by more than 25% (a quarter) of our usual dose every week. If we tend to take the drugs in binges at weekends, or when we have enough money, or we take cocktails of different drugs, then the plan may need to be worked out with the expert advice of a drug counsellor.

The first step is to keep a diary of our drug taking for a week or two (see ***Food and Drug Record*** page). Once we Then to work out a plan for reducing this slowly in the easiest way.

b) Coping with cravings

When we try to stop taking drugs we usually get incredibly strong urges to use the drug again. These urges are called **cravings**. They are most frequent when we are cutting down the drug, but may even occur months after we have stopped. As we have discussed earlier, cravings may be caused by our body becoming so used to having the drug that it sends us very strong signals when it is missing. This is called **dependence**. The only way to overcome this dependence is to gradually get our body used to working without the drug.

Not all cravings are triggered by the reactions of our body. Just as when we smell a meal cooking, we may become hungry, particular situations that remind us of the pleasant effects of drugs, may make us hunger for them. All sorts of situations may trigger these cravings:

TRIGGERS FOR CRAVINGS

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| PEOPLE: | Talking to drug using friends
Seeing a drug dealer |
| PLACES: | Going to places where drugs are used |
| THINGS: | Pipes, screens, syringes, lighters, having spare cash |
| THOUGHTS: | "I would sleep better if I smoked a joint"
"I might meet a friend in that bar"
"Another beer would make me less shy" |

FEELINGS: Feeling sad, anxious, unloved, angry, frustrated

WHAT SEEMS TO TRIGGER OUR CRAVINGS?

If we can cope with the cravings without using drugs they will gradually become less severe, and will eventually stop. If we recognise what triggers our cravings we can work out how to avoid those situations. Even when we cannot avoid having cravings, they usually pass after a short time if we can manage to do something to take our mind off using drugs. Some ways to cope are:

COPING WITH CRAVINGS

- avoid people, places and things that trigger cravings
 - relax and wait till the cravings pass
 - walk away from the situation
 - do something enjoyable
- speak with a friend who is helping with the programme
 - get rewards for all our coping efforts

c) Rewards for all efforts

Stopping taking drugs is a great achievement. It is vital that everybody helps the person who is trying to stop. Apart from suggesting helpful ideas, it is essential that everyone provides encouragement by praising the person for all their efforts, no matter how small, or how successful. Try to avoid being critical, unless we can offer a solution that will be even better than those that the person has been trying.

WHAT STRATEGIES DO WE THINK MAY HELP US COPE WITH CRAVINGS FOR DRUGS?

d) Refusing drugs or drink from a friend

One of the most difficult situations to deal with is to refuse to take alcohol or drugs when they are offered by a good friend. We may feel that if we refuse their offer that they will break off their friendship with us. Of course a good friend will not try to force us to accept things against our will, and will be as concerned as we are that our friendship continues. So that if we can explain to them our reasons for turning down their offer, they will be pleased to accept this. Unfortunately some of the people who were our friends when we took drugs together, may not be the good friends we thought they were. It may be necessary to give up many of those friends and find others who really care about us and may be interested in different things.

Here are some steps that we might follow to cope with this situation:

REFUSING ALCOHOL OR DRUGS FROM A FRIEND

- look at the person, speak firmly
- tell them that we are not interested
 - thank them for the offer
 - repeat this if necessary
- explain that drugs have been causing us problems
 - suggest an alternative drink or activity
- express our unpleasant feelings if we feel pressured
- walk away if the person will not take "no" for an answer

HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED TO US? WHAT DID WE DO?

It is often helpful to practice how we would cope with this situation. Who would we choose to practice this with? Set up the situation so that it is as close as possible to real life, and try to use some of these ideas as well as our own. This can be a situation that has occurred in the past, or one that is likely to happen in the future. Where would it be likely to happen? Who would the friend be? What is he or she like? What sort of thing would they say? How would they react when we refused their offer? What sort of thoughts and feelings would we have in the situation?

Example

Joe went to a birthday party of his cousin Sandra. There was a lot of wine and beer, but Joe drank lemonade. At the end of the party they all sang Happy Birthday to Sandy, and his cousin Tom went around filling people's glasses with sparkling wine. Tom remembered that he could have one glass of wine without problems, but didn't really like sparkling wine. He told Tom that he didn't want any wine. Tom said, "Come on you have to toast Sandy properly". Joe said "That's OK thanks. I don't care for sparkling wine". Tom went away, but came back to Joe later and asked him if there was anything wrong. Joe told him that he had had schizophrenia, and that alcohol interfered with the medicine that he was taking, and might stop him recovering. Tom seemed very interested and told Joe he would like to help in any way that he could.

Reviewing the practice

Once each of us has attempted to handle the practice situation it is important to review our efforts. First we praise all the good points. Then, if necessary, we can suggest ways that might lead to major improvements.

WHAT PARTICULAR THINGS DID WE LIKE ABOUT THE WAY WE HANDLED THAT SITUATION?

DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS ABOUT WAYS WE COULD HAVE HANDLED THAT SITUATION EVEN BETTER?

We may find it helpful to practice using several different strategies until we are confident that we could cope with a similar situation in real life. We may wish to practice how we would cope with even more difficult situations. Make a list of the key strategies that we found most helpful:

Refusing drugs from a drug dealer

The ability to refuse to buy drugs from a dealer may require a somewhat different approach. Some suggestions that people have found useful include:

REFUSING TO BUY DRUGS FROM A DEALER
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• avoid looking at dealer• do not stop and talk• walk away immediately• speak firmly "I don't want any"• do not let him give us any drugs• do NOT explain our reasons

HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED TO ANY OF US? WHAT DID WE DO?

Roleplayed Practice

Once again, it is helpful to practice how to cope with this situation. We can set up the situation so that it is as close as possible to real life. We can try to use some the ideas listed above as well as trying other strategies that we think might be useful. The situation that we choose might be one that we have experienced before, or one that is likely to happen in the future. Where would it be likely to happen? Who would the dealer be? What is he or she like?

What sort of thing would they say? How would they react when someone refused their offer? What sort of thoughts and feelings would we have in the situation?

Example

Susanna was waiting for her boyfriend near a bar that she used to go to. A dealer she knew walked by and recognised her. He said "I have got some really good stuff. You must try it." She began to walk away saying "I don't want any". He followed her and said "Come on Susie, it's great stuff, and I can make a fantastic deal with you right now. Don't worry if you are short of cash." She kept walking even faster, saying "I don't do drugs any more. I don't want any. Please leave me alone." He tried to put a packet of drugs in her pocket, but she hit his hand and shouted "Leave me alone". Some other people noticed them and the dealer quickly walked away.

Reviewing the practice

Once we have attempted to handle the practice situation it is important to review our efforts. First we praise all the good points. Then, if necessary we can suggest ways that might get better results.

WHAT PARTICULAR THINGS DID WE LIKE ABOUT THE WAY WE COPE WITH THAT SITUATION?

DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS ABOUT WAYS THAT WE COULD HAVE COPE WITH THAT SITUATION EVEN BETTER?

We may find it helpful to practice using several different strategies until we are confident that we could cope with a similar situation in real life. We may wish to practice how we would cope with even more difficult situations. Make a list of the key strategies that we found most useful:

e) Finding new friends and interests

Taking drugs is often closely tied to friends and activities. So that stopping successfully may be achieved only when we are able to break away from those friends and those activities that we used to enjoy. Finding new friends and new enjoyable activities is always difficult. The easiest solution is to go back to old friends and old activities. But one of the reasons that we may have started taking drugs in the first place may have been dissatisfaction with our

previous life, and as an attempt to find more excitement. So we may want to think of ways of having more enjoyment in our life without taking drugs or associating with drug using friends.

One strategy to help us do this is called ***Increasing Rewarding Activities***. This method helps maximise the enjoyable and satisfying things we do every day. The strategies of ***Making Friends*** may also help us change our lifestyles by getting a new circle of close friends.

House Rules

Many of us who have problems that are linked to using alcohol or drugs are helped when people that care about us reward all our efforts to solve these problems. As well as giving praise and encouragement for these efforts friends and family members can help by setting clear rules for the behaviour that they expect from us, particularly if we live with them. Of course these rules should apply to all members of the household. Some rules that people have found most useful are:

SETTING HOUSE RULES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• adherence to treatment• attendance at household meetings• assistance with household chores• assistance with household finances• no violence to people or property• no inappropriate sexual behaviour<ul style="list-style-type: none">• no illegal drug use• no illegal activities of any kind

LAPSE /RELAPSE (falling off the wagon)

Sometimes our best efforts to lead a drug free lifestyle are challenged. It is vitally important that we do not let a slip or lapse of using alcohol or drugs become a relapse, where we are no longer able to control our substance use.

Slip ups are common. They give us a good time to remember the reasons we decided to quit using substances in the first place. We may need to do some more work on the problems that triggered our slip. Any lapse is simply an opportunity for learning and not a disaster or a sign that we are hopeless and are not able to live without drugs or alcohol.

A Problem Analysis of the Lapse

In order to get a better idea about the things that may have caused this lapse our Instructor will ask X_____ some questions about it using the ***Problem Analysis Worksheet***. This will take 15-20 minutes. We can all stay and listen, but we may have other things that we would rather be doing at this time.

Feedback to all group members

(after the Problem Analysis worksheet has been filled in and key points noted on the list below)

We have had a good discussion about the lapse that X_____ has had. Some of the points that we felt were particularly helpful in thinking of ways to solve this problem were:

Are there any other points that we would like to add to these?

Problem Solving: A Plan to Manage the Lapse

Now let's use the ***Problem Solving and Goal Achievement Worksheet*** to develop a plan to solve the problem of a lapse and to prevent a relapse.

We will keep to our usual arrangements for your Resource Group Meetings, with our usual Chairperson and Secretary. Our Instructor will only suggest solutions that have been shown to be very helpful in dealing with this sort of problem in similar circumstances, especially when those ideas have been supported by good research.

If we have decided that there are several important problems that need to be tackled, we may need to carry out separate problem solving discussions for each problem issue.

Putting it all together

Now that we have considered all the possible problems we may have finding alternative to drugs or alcohol to solve our problems we can complete the ***PLAN TO SOLVE MY PROBLEMS OF USING DRUGS OR ALCOHOL*** on page 11.

We will continue to review our progress over the next few sessions and may find even better solutions to our problems. This is likely to be a slow process, with setbacks from time to time. So we will all need to be very patient and give one another as much encouragement as we can for all their efforts.

PROBLEM ANALYSIS

PROBLEM: *What is the problem? How often does it happen? How long does it last? How distressing? (Use chart)*

BRIEF BACKGROUND: _____

ANTECEDENTS: *What happens in the moments just before the problem occurs? Do you find yourself in certain places, situations, or with certain types of people? Do you have any special thoughts or feelings? What exactly are you doing at that moment?* _____

CONSEQUENCES: *What happens immediately after the problem starts? What thoughts and feelings do you have? What things do you do? What do other people do? How do other people react?*

MODIFYING FACTORS:

a) *What seems to make the problem better? What makes it less likely to occur? (List all without discussion)*

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____
4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____

b) *What seems to make the problem worse? What makes it more likely to occur?*

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____
4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____

BENEFITS AND DIFFICULTIES WHEN THIS PROBLEM IS SOLVED:

a) *What benefits will you get when this problem is solved?*

b) *What possible disadvantages might there be for you when the problem is solved? e.g. loss of attention, pressure to work or to become more active, and to be expected to immediately do all those things you used to do?*

CURRENT PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGIES:

List all efforts to solve the problem, both effective and ineffective, including self, friends, professional treatment, etc

SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE: *Who could help you to work on this problem?* _____

SOLVING PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVING GOALS

Step 1. What exactly is the problem or goal?

Talk about the problem or goal until we can write down exactly what it is. Ask questions to make the issue clearer. Break a big problem or goal into smaller parts.

Step 2. List all possible solutions -- brain storming

Make a list of all ideas, even "bad" or "silly" suggestions. Get everyone to suggest something. Do NOT talk about whether ideas are good or bad at this stage.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Step 3. Briefly highlight the main advantages & disadvantages

Get our group to say quickly what we think are the main advantages and disadvantages of each suggestion. Do NOT write anything. Do NOT compare the possible solutions at this point.

Step 4. Choose the most practical suggestion

Choose the solution that can be carried out most easily with the resources (time, skills, materials, money) that we have at present.

Step 5. Plan exactly how to carry out the solution

Organise the resources we need. Consider how to cope with likely hitches. Practise all difficult steps -- rehearse or role play.

Date and time to review progress with plan _____

Step 6. Review progress in carrying out plan

Praise all the efforts we have made. Review progress on each step. Change the plan. Try another solution. Continue problem solving until our problem is resolved or our goal is achieved.

PLAN TO SOLVE MY PROBLEMS OF USING DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

Name _____

Date _____

PERSONAL GOALS

GOAL FOR MY SUBSTANCE USE PROBLEM

PLAN

**WARNING SIGNALS: SITUATIONS WHERE I FIND IT HARD
NOT TO USE DRUGS OR ALCOHOL**

high risk situation

strategy to cope

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

**ACTIVITIES THAT HELP ME TO LIVE
WITHOUT USING DRUGS OR ALCOHOL**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

**THINGS MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY
CAN DO TO HELP ME**

1. _____

2. _____

PLAN TO COPE WITH LAPSES

Food, Drink and Drug Chart

Name: _____

Date: _____

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
0800-0900							
0900-1000							
1000-1100							
1100-1200							
1200-1300							
1300-1400							
1400-1500							
1500-1600							
1600-1700							
1700-1800							
1800-1900							
1900-2000							
2000-2100							
2100-2200							
2200-2300							
2300-2400							