



CERTIFIED FACILITATOR – SAMENOW'S OVERCOMING ERRORS IN THINKING

8 Continuing Education Credits

Asynchronous Distance Learning Course

Content Level: Intermediate

Course Author: Stanton E. Samenow, Ph.D.

Last Updated: 2026

Approved by such credentialing bodies as:

- **National Association of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors (NAADAC) #94564**
- **National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) #6310**

All approval bodies are listed at ceumatrix.com/accreditations

For questions or to request accessibility accommodations please email us at: support@ceumatrix.com

© 2026 CEU Matrix. All rights reserved.



Welcome to CEU Matrix. We have been committed to supporting the continuing education of behavioral health professionals since 2007. Please reach out with any questions, ideas, or feedback.

*Do the best you can until you know better.
Then when you know better, do better.*

— Maya Angelou

COPYRIGHT

Original course materials, including the front matter, supplemental research synthesis, post-test, and CEU Matrix-authored content: © Copyright 2026 CEU Matrix. All rights reserved.

This course is based on training materials by Stanton E. Samenow, Ph.D., reproduced under license from the original copyright holder, who retains all rights to that content.

No portion of this course may be reproduced in any manner without the written permission of the publisher and, where applicable, the original copyright holder, in accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, Title 17 U.S.C.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Stanton E. Samenow is a clinical psychologist whose work over the past five decades has shaped contemporary understanding of criminal thinking and rehabilitation. He earned his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Michigan in 1968 and, in 1970, joined Dr. Samuel Yochelson's research and treatment program at Saint Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C., where the two conducted a landmark longitudinal study of offenders that fundamentally reframed how the field approaches criminal behavior.

Their collaboration produced *The Criminal Personality*, a three-volume work identifying the cognitive patterns common to offenders and laying the groundwork for cognitive-behavioral interventions still used in correctional and forensic settings today. After Dr. Yochelson's death in 1976, Dr. Samenow continued and expanded this work as a sole author, writing extensively for both clinical and lay audiences. His books include *Inside the Criminal Mind*, *Before It's Too Late: Why Some Kids Get Into Trouble and What Parents Can Do About It*, and *Straight Talk About Criminals*.

Dr. Samenow has maintained a private practice in Alexandria, Virginia, focused on the assessment of and consultation regarding offenders, and has served as a consultant and expert witness in courts throughout the United States.

The Evidence Base: Three Decades of Research on Criminal Thinking

When Yochelson and Samenow published *The Criminal Personality* in the 1970s and 1980s, the concept of criminal thinking errors was groundbreaking but controversial. Many in the field questioned whether thinking patterns — rather than socioeconomic conditions, childhood trauma, or mental illness — could meaningfully explain criminal behavior. Three decades of subsequent research have substantially validated the core premise: cognitive distortions play a central and measurable role in criminal conduct.

A 2024 systematic literature review published in *BMC Psychology* examined 25 studies conducted between 2019 and 2024 on the relationship between cognitive distortions and criminal behavior. The review confirmed that distorted thinking patterns "not only induce unlawful conduct but also have distinct impacts on various kinds of offenses." Different types of cognitive distortions were associated with different categories of criminal behavior, supporting Yochelson and Samenow's original observation that criminal thinking is not a single trait but a constellation of specific errors that manifest across multiple domains of decision-making (Syasyila et al., 2024).

This finding matters for practitioners because it reinforces the approach central to this course: identifying and addressing specific thinking errors rather than treating criminality as a monolithic condition. A participant who demonstrates victim stance thinking may require different intervention strategies than one whose primary errors involve power orientation or entitlement. The research supports individualized assessment of which thinking errors are most prominent for each client.

Measuring Criminal Thinking: Validated Assessment Tools

The concepts that Yochelson and Samenow identified through clinical observation have since been operationalized into validated measurement instruments. This matters because it allows practitioners to assess criminal thinking patterns systematically rather than relying solely on clinical judgment.

The TCU Criminal Thinking Scales, one of the most widely used instruments in correctional settings, underwent psychometric reevaluation in 2022 using Item Response Theory methodology. The analysis confirmed good internal reliability across all scales, with each scale loading onto a single factor. The researchers noted that the scales demonstrated negative correlations with treatment motivation and psychosocial functioning — meaning higher criminal thinking scores were associated with lower motivation for treatment and poorer social adjustment, consistent with the patterns described throughout this course (Sease et al., 2022).

Approximately 600,000 individuals are released from U.S. prisons each year. Many carry entrenched criminal thinking patterns that impede successful reentry. Validated instruments like the TCU Criminal Thinking Scales provide practitioners with tools to identify these patterns at intake, track changes during treatment, and measure outcomes — moving criminal thinking assessment from a clinical art to an evidence-based practice.

Criminal Thinking and Substance Use: The Overlap

This course addresses criminal thinking errors in a population that frequently presents with co-occurring substance use disorders. The overlap between criminal thinking patterns and substance abuse is not coincidental — research demonstrates that these patterns interact and reinforce each other.

A 2022 longitudinal study of 341 veterans with criminal histories in residential mental health treatment used latent class analysis to identify distinct subgroups based on substance use and criminal thinking trajectories. Four classes emerged: a normative improvement group (53%) that maintained low levels across both domains; a high criminogenic thinking group (27%); a high substance use recurrence group (11%); and a high drug use group (9%). The 47% of participants in the three higher-risk classes showed substantially elevated depression scores at follow-up compared to those in the normative improvement group (Timko et al., 2022).

The clinical implication is direct: substance use and criminal thinking must be addressed together. A program that treats addiction without addressing the thinking patterns that supported criminal behavior — or one that targets thinking errors while ignoring active substance use — is likely to see limited results in either domain. The Yochelson-Samenow approach, with its emphasis on the parallels between addictive thinking and criminal thinking, anticipated this finding by decades.

Developmental Trajectories: How Criminal Thinking Changes Over Time

One question practitioners frequently encounter is whether criminal thinking patterns are fixed or changeable. The Yochelson-Samenow framework holds that change is possible but requires sustained effort, self-disgust, and accountability. Recent longitudinal research supports this position with population-level data.

A 2022 study tracked moral disengagement — a key component of criminal thinking — in 1,273 serious juvenile offenders from age 16 to 22, using data from the Pathways to Desistance study. The majority of participants (93.6%) followed one of two declining trajectory patterns, meaning criminal thinking scores decreased over time for most individuals in this sample. The researcher found that trajectory direction — whether thinking patterns were improving or worsening — was "at least as important as trajectory magnitude in predicting future offending" (Walters, 2022).

This finding has direct relevance for treatment. When assessing client progress, practitioners should not focus solely on the current level of criminal thinking. A client whose thinking error scores are moderate but declining may be on a stronger trajectory than one whose scores are low but stable or rising. Monitoring the direction of change over time provides a more meaningful indicator of treatment progress than any single assessment.

The study also confirms what Samenow has long argued: most offenders are capable of changing their thinking patterns. The question is not whether change is possible, but what motivates and sustains it.

Therapeutic Approaches to Changing Criminal Thinking: What Works

The Yochelson-Samenow approach represents one of the earliest systematic methods for addressing criminal thinking. Since its development, several other cognitive-behavioral approaches have been applied to this population. Understanding how these approaches compare helps practitioners contextualize the thinking errors framework within the broader treatment landscape.

A 2024 systematic review in Campbell Systematic Reviews examined the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy for reducing reoffending across criminal justice settings. The review, which updated a landmark 2007 meta-analysis by Lipsey and colleagues, evaluated whether CBT effectiveness varies based on intervention type — distinguishing between cognitive restructuring (which directly challenges distorted thinking, as this course teaches) and cognitive skills training (which focuses on building prosocial skills). The review also examined whether effectiveness differed between juvenile and adult populations and how implementation quality affected outcomes (Smith et al., 2024).

A separate 2024 study tested the effectiveness of rational-emotive behavior therapy — another cognitive approach that shares conceptual ground with the thinking errors framework — on criminal thinking and law-evasion behaviors among 30 male prisoners. After 12 sessions, the intervention group showed significant decreases in both criminal thinking and law-evasion scores compared to the control group. These gains persisted at one-month follow-up (Shomali Ahmadabadi et al., 2024).

For practitioners, these findings reinforce a central message: cognitive interventions that directly target thinking patterns produce measurable reductions in criminal thinking. The specific model — whether Yochelson-Samenow's thinking errors, rational-emotive therapy, or moral reconnection therapy — matters less than the shared mechanism: systematically identifying distorted cognitions and replacing them with more accurate, responsible thinking.

Treatment Matching: For Whom Does Intervention Work Best?

Not all participants respond equally to cognitive-behavioral interventions targeting criminal thinking. A 2024 randomized controlled trial examined moderators of treatment effectiveness for moral reconnection therapy among 341 justice-involved veterans. The results identified specific subgroups who benefited most: recently incarcerated veterans showed reductions in criminal associations and substance use; recently convicted veterans demonstrated employment and substance use improvements; and veterans with high psychopathic traits showed consistent reductions in substance use across follow-up periods (Blonigen et al., 2024).

The finding about psychopathic traits is particularly relevant to the Yochelson-Samenow framework. Many practitioners assume that individuals with strong antisocial and psychopathic characteristics are the least treatable. This study suggests the opposite may be true for structured cognitive-behavioral interventions — these participants may actually show the greatest gains, perhaps because they have the most room for cognitive restructuring.

This does not mean that change comes easily for this population. It means that the confrontational, fact-based approach described throughout this course — "afflicting the comfortable rather than

comforting the afflicted" — may be particularly effective with participants who have historically resisted more empathy-driven therapeutic approaches.

A Systems Perspective on Criminal Thinking

The Yochelson-Samenow framework focuses on individual thinking patterns. A 2024 article in the *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* proposed expanding this lens through General Systems Theory, arguing that criminal thinking and behavior can be better understood when examined through interconnected systems rather than isolated factors (Scollione, 2024).

This perspective does not contradict the thinking errors approach — it extends it. Criminal thinking patterns do not develop in isolation. They are shaped by family systems, peer networks, institutional environments, and community contexts. A participant in a drug court program may demonstrate progress in group sessions but return to an environment that reinforces the very thinking errors addressed in treatment. Effective intervention requires attention to the systems in which thinking patterns are embedded, maintained, and potentially disrupted.

For facilitators working with this material, the systems perspective offers a practical lens: when a participant resists change or demonstrates backsliding, consider not only the individual's thinking but the systems sustaining those patterns. Are there peer relationships that reward criminal thinking? Is the participant's living environment reinforcing victim stance or entitlement? Addressing these systemic factors alongside individual cognitive work may strengthen treatment outcomes.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In the 1960’s and 1970’s two doctors, one a psychiatrist and one a psychologist began working with individuals housed in a hospital unit for the criminally insane in Washington, D.C. Dr. Samuel Yochelson was a psychiatrist who had had a successful private practice for years in Buffalo, New York, and who had also appeared regularly on a local television show informing the public about psychiatry. In his mid-50’s Dr. Yochelson decided to take on a new challenge and leave the comfort and security of his private practice in search of making a more lasting contribution to the field he had made his life’s work.

Dr. Stanton Samenow is a psychologist who had accepted suggestions from Dr. Yochelson as a doctoral student concerning a dissertation on college dropouts. Dr. Samenow had found that using standard procedures, practices and theories were not leading to significant results with the adolescents he was working with early in his career. Thus, he decided to abandon his work with adolescents for the opportunity to join Dr. Yochelson and his research treatment program based at Saint Elizabeth’s Hospital.

In the beginning, Dr.’s Yochelson and Samenow were intent on finding the psychological and emotional causes of criminality. Both drug users and non-drug users were studied. Over time what began to emerge was surprising. First, it seemed that regardless of the amount of insight attained about early conflicts or trauma in life, rather than leading to more appropriate behavior, such insights were often used as excuses for ongoing patterns of violations inside and outside the hospital setting. In fact, early in their research efforts, they noted that many of the offenders participating in the group continue to commit offenses.

Second, while a substantial number of the offenders came from backgrounds of poverty, abuse and neglect, nearly all had siblings from these same backgrounds who had not become criminals. Many had caring families that had done everything they knew how to do to help these individuals, but to no avail. Consequently, the doctors began to turn away from focusing on a deterministic view of criminality, e.g. childhood abuse and trauma, to one that focused not on the environment but rather on the choices offenders make in coping with whatever their circumstances are.

Third, while initially they believed that these individuals suffered from low self-esteem resulting from experiencing failures in life, it became obvious that the opposite was true! Most had highly inflated views of themselves and their abilities; thinking themselves smarter and better than others.

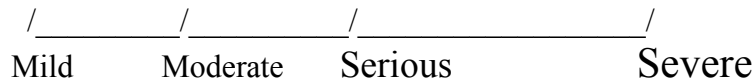
Other theories, such as the role of peer pressure and “falling in with the wrong crowd,” or that being denied the opportunities others have in life had driven these individuals to crime, began to crumble. It turned out that these individuals were not so much failed by their schools as they failed to make any effort toward school; they didn’t “fall into the wrong crowd,” they sought out the wrong crowd. And rather than being highly impulsive or compulsive people who couldn’t control themselves, they tended to be highly controlled and “opportunistic” in the commission of crimes.

Slowly, Drs. Yochelson and Samenow began abandoning their theories of psychological and sociological causes for crime, and began focusing on the thinking patterns. They began examining the criminal’s **choices**, and his or her rationalizations and justifications for such behavior. They began mapping the worldview of the criminal. Ultimately, they identified a variety of thinking errors that criminals have in common regardless of age, race, social class or educational background. Their search for the cause of crime and what they eventually discovered are published in their landmark work *The Criminal Personality*, a three volume set outlining the process by which they arrived at a new view of the criminal and how to help him or her change.

At the very core of this approach is the idea of “afflicting the comfortable, rather than comforting the afflicted.” What leads to lasting change in the criminal offender is becoming absolutely fed-up with him or her self. In his past, the criminal (very much like the addict) experienced instances of self-disgust, but this has not resulted in behavioral change. The offender must be constantly reminded of the consequences of his or her actions, the damaged and destroyed lives, and the fact that continuing on the same path will lead to a life of more and more incarceration for longer periods of time. Other than accepting this as his or her lot in life - or committing suicide - change is the only option that remains. Those who have worked primarily with addicts will notice that these same dynamics apply to the process of change with addiction as well as with criminality. In fact there is a saying heard in AA groups across the country that, “If you don’t remember your last drunk, you haven’t had it.” This is a reference to the need for the alcoholic to constantly remind himself of the devastating consequences of past behavior.

Drs. Yochelson and Samenow recognized in their landmark research that the offender is constantly sizing up others, and that this remains true when he or she enters a treatment program. He sees everything in terms of power and control, contests of will, and winning and losing. Therefore, rather than concerning themselves primarily with showing empathy or developing rapport, Drs. Yochelson and Samenow were more concerned with direct, but respectful and factual discussions in which they revealed to the criminal what they knew about his M.O. and mindset. They learned not to be deceived by the criminal’s attempts to portray himself as the victim rather than the victimizer. They learned not to allow their efforts to be diverted by an array of irrelevant matters and tactics criminals introduce to derail the therapist.

Drs. Yochelson and Samenow laid out what they had learned about the offenders with whom they worked - that they (the offenders) tended to be secretive even as children, took great pride and pleasure in being able to fool others with their “slickness”, demanded the world bend to their wishes rather than trying to accommodate themselves better to the world, were highly critical of others but had a “glass jaw” when it came to taking criticism, and tended to see themselves as unique individuals to whom the normal rules of society do not apply. Again, those who work with addicts will notice the commonality of many of these traits. In fact, most of these traits can be thought of as running along the lines of a continuum, from mild to severe as demonstrated in the diagram below:



Where addictions and/or criminality are concerned, the degree of severity of these traits can have a great deal to do with the individual’s ability to “hit bottom” – that is to develop enough self-disgust to motivate change. Additionally, Yochelson and Samenow let the offenders with whom they worked know they did not expect them to be fervently committed to change from the outset. In fact, they often revealed to these clients that they knew they had always viewed the world of “straights” as boring, dull and a fate worse than death. (Again, those who have worked with addicts will recognize that this is common to how many feel in the beginning stages of their recovery. In fact, motivational interviewing has made much of the counselor’s ability to recognize “ambivalence” on the part of the client in the early stages of the change process.)

The criminal’s way of life has never led to anything more than fleeting satisfaction, without change they face a life of increasing time incarcerated and betraying those who care about them. The Drs. did not berate, browbeat, attempt to humiliate or ridicule the men and women with whom they worked, but treated them with respect. Nonetheless, they were firm and matter-of-fact about unmasking the façade of respectability these individuals presented.

This course is an overview of some of the basic principles, dynamics and errors in thinking that constitute the foundation of Drs. Yochelson and Samenow’s original work, as demonstrated in Dr. Samenow’s highly popular “Commitment to Change” video series. The material covered in this course corresponds with and uses examples based on the first three videos in the series entitled “Overcoming Errors in Thinking.”

It should be noted that while the dynamics of addiction may involve more physiological aspects than is the case with criminality, the applicability of these errors in thinking to the lifestyles and mindsets of both groups, should be obvious.

HOW *ERRORS IN THINKING* RELATE TO OTHER APPROACHES AND PROGRAMS

This information, as presented by Dr. Samenow, can be used to support or complement many existing programs. The heart of this approach -- taking personal responsibility for our decisions -- is a concept shared by many treatment programs. Twelve-step programs identify “alcoholic” or “stinking thinking” as a barrier to recovery. Therapeutic Communities confront “dope fiend moves,” which are actions motivated by attempts to deceive, manipulate or control others. In virtually all programs of recovery, people are encouraged to take responsibility for their lives and their actions. As this approach assists participants to become aware of their distorted, irresponsible ways of thinking and interacting with others, it can also serve as a catalyst to initiate the process of accepting responsibility.

Because personal change is a complex and challenging process, effective programs utilize a variety of approaches and techniques. Any treatment or educational program can benefit from the information provided in this course. It provides participants with vivid, clear and concrete

descriptions of major errors involved in shaping the irresponsible and destructive thinking of those serving in both “free world” treatment centers and in criminal justice settings.

People who know they need to change often fail to recognize the role of thinking in the feelings, attitudes and behavior that create problems. The approach presented here not only provides a set of concrete, practical ways to begin to identify these errors – but also to overcome them – and to open the door to responsible choices and responsible living. Although all of us realize we cannot fully control what happens to us, we also know we can decide how to react to a given situation or circumstance. This is the core of what it is to have free will – to be able to determine the choices we make. These choices make a crucial difference. Through the examples provided in the group and interview sessions, this course teaches how to hold a mirror up to clients who are blind to these dynamics; to encourage an honest, unflinching look at their lives and the role their thinking has played in creating them.

The corrections community has embraced this approach in many arenas – along with educators, youth workers and other mental health, and social services professionals. Programs and workshops utilizing these materials are sponsored by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the National Institute on Corrections (NIC), and Departments of Corrections, Community Corrections Programs, probation and parole offices and private treatment providers in just about every state. Many professionals, publications and programs have built on the original research of Drs. Yochelson and Samenow. It was in response to numerous requests, that Dr. Samenow created a unique and practical, step-by-step video program. We are pleased to be able to adapt that work and information for this course.

INTRODUCTION

A Key to Change: YOUR THOUGHTS

The good news is we can change. None of us needs to be a prisoner of our thoughts or our behavior.

Think about the last 24 hours; can you remember a specific situation when you felt angry? Think about what you said – what you did. What happened as a result – what were the consequences? What would have happened if you had acted on your thoughts (for instance, lashed out in anger), rather than controlling your actions?

Can you think of a recent event that you would like to re-live, if you could, in order to do things differently? What trouble resulted? What could you, or would you have done differently?

Think of a recent temptation to do something that you knew was wrong. Can you remember what you thought before you decided what to do? What was the temptation? What actually happened? When stopping to look back, are you happy with how you handled the situation? If not, how could you have handled the situation differently? Would this have led to a different result? Would the result have been better or worse? What role would changing your thinking about the situation have played in changing the outcome?

Consider the following basic tenets of the cognitive-behavioral approach:

- Some thoughts lead to undesirable outcomes.
- Thoughts that result in injury to others and undesirable consequences to ourselves are considered “errors in thinking.”
- By teaching offenders to become aware of their thoughts that lead to trouble, we can teach them to catch errors in thinking before they act.
- They can stop and remember the harm their actions may have caused in the past, and forecast the harm those thoughts may result in now or in the future.
- By being aware of the full range of consequences from past attitudes and actions, clients can become acutely aware of the heavy price they or others have often paid for their destructive acts.
- Counselors often assume that because clients have entered treatment previously, the work of identifying these dynamics has already been accomplished – that is, these dynamics are obvious and known to the clients. However, because a large percentage of clients (especially when mandated to treatment) enter treatment in the “precontemplation” stage, most have not truly considered the full ramifications of their actions on others or even on their own lives.
- Beginning to comprehend the role of thinking in keeping us locked into destructive patterns of behavior can provide the motivation and the commitment to change.

When any of us changes our thinking, we change our behavior. A major roadblock to recovery is the temptation to take a shortcut in order to accomplish something of value. However, by stopping and catching thoughts – before acting – our clients can embark on taking a different path in life.

Evidence Based Treatment

This program constitutes an Evidence-Based Treatment approach in a multitude of ways.

In 1976, Drs. Stanton Samenow and Samuel Yokelson published the ground-breaking book “The Criminal Personality” based on the largest research-treatment study of criminal behavior ever conducted to the present time. In this study, they identified “thinking errors” as one of the key components of criminal behavior. The Commitment To Change program is the culmination of that work.

One of the learning methods employed in the videos and this workbook is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). CBT has been found to be effective in more than 1,000 outcome studies.

These videos and this workbook use role-play exercises to allow participants to experience the same situation from multiple points of view, such as victim AND perpetrator. Targeted interventions of this type are an established form of Evidence Based Treatment.

This program asks the client to engage with material presented in the videos and the group leader’s discussions through the interactive journaling method. This type of written self-reflection helps the client modify his behavior as he progresses through the stages of change and constitutes a widely accepted basis of Evidence Based Treatment.

This work contains a set of pre- and post-test questions to administer to clients upon both entry to and successful discharge from this program. It is invaluable to take the course upon entry and to re-take close to discharge. The differences are often astounding. This basic rechanneling of thought processes can create more openness and willingness so that the participant engages in more positive programs/lifestyles.

The National Registry of Evidence-Based Practices and Programs (NREPP) requires:

“an intervention that has had one or more positive outcomes” ...

“an evaluation report” ...

“documentation such as training manuals” (this workbook).

Thus, with some effort you can create your own specific Evidence Based Treatment program! Should you create one of these, we would appreciate your sharing your results with us.

Across America and in countries around the world, tens of thousands of people have been treated using this program. Several studies have been published documenting that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy produces positive outcomes for clients who successfully complete the program. We are confident that by using this program as it presented here, you too will achieve successful outcomes for many of your clients.

How

THE THREE VIDEOS

Work Together

While each video can stand alone, the full power of this program to motivate and facilitate change is greatest when they are used together -- especially when reinforced by the learning experiences outlined in this guide.

VIDEO PART I...

...captures viewer interest and provides a powerful source of motivation. *Why Change?* is a painfully honest sequence revealing the personal costs of a destructive lifestyle.

This video puts the focus clearly on thinking and explores, in depth, two fundamental errors.

VIDEO PART II...

...reveals and explores two errors in thinking which are so common -- and so crucial -- that they must be addressed if change is to become a real possibility.

VIDEO PART III...

...focuses on practical ways to change. Exploring a final, key error demonstrates how change can begin. In *Fear of Change* and *Look in the Mirror* inmates reveal a depth of insight about change not often seen. Through roleplay and exploration, we see -- in action -- down-to-earth, *Practical Steps for Change*.

With purchase of this course, you receive...

- Three training videos
- The complete Leader's Guide and Workbook
- Staff training materials

Human nature is complex.

There are no simple solutions. No single approach can meet all the needs of all the people we serve.

The material presented here has proven valuable as an independent program -- as well as a component and complement to many types of programs.

Change is never easy. It demands motivation, effort, support and time. But it is essential that we -- and our clients -- remember that change is possible.

-- Stanton E. Samenow, Ph.D.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

The Program in Brief.....	
Using This Program.....	
How This Program Supports Other Treatment/Educational Approaches.....	
Why a Program about Thinking Errors?.....	
About Dr. Samenow.....	
Learning Gains Measures Pre/Post Test	
Summary of the Video - Part I <i><u>What are Errors in Thinking?</u></i>	
<u>Preview Session</u> <i>Behind Our Actions: The Way We Think</i>	
<u>Session One</u> <i>Why Change?</i>	
<u>Session Two</u> <i>Error in Thinking: "I'm a victim of others."</i>	
<u>Session Three</u> <i>Error in Thinking: "I'm a victim of my substance abuse."</i>	
<u>Session Four</u> <i>"I'm responsible for my choices."</i>	
Summary of the Video - Part II <i><u>Two Crucial Errors</u></i>	53
<u>Session Five</u> <i>Error in Thinking: "I want it fast and easy."</i>	
<u>Session Six</u> <i>Where does this Thinking Lead?</i>	
<u>Session Seven</u> <i>Error in Thinking: "No one was hurt."</i>	
<u>Session Eight</u> <i>Who is Hurt?</i>	
Summary of the Video - Part III <i><u>Overcoming Errors in Thinking</u></i>	78
<u>Session Nine</u> <i>Error in Thinking: "It's okay to shut off fear."</i>	
<u>Session Ten</u> <i>Catch the Error -- Remember Where it Leads</i>	
<u>Session Eleven</u> <i>Fear of Change and Responsible Options</i>	
Books and For Further Information.....	

THE PROGRAM IN BRIEF

PURPOSE of the program

- To introduce and explore the concept of thinking errors
- To support and complement programs which ask participants to become aware of their thinking
- To encourage and motivate personal change
- To provide a program which can help people work toward change

For Staff Training:

- To provide vivid information and insights about thinking errors
- To demonstrate methods to address thinking errors in a program for change.

Educational objectives are provided in the guidelines for each session.

WHO IS THE PROGRAM FOR?

For Staff Training --

- For those who can benefit from further knowledge of errors in thinking and destructive or criminal behavior
- For those who will lead a counselling or instruction program for change

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

The Program acts like a mirror, allowing viewers first to discover errors in thinking in other people -- along with the consequences they create. It is easiest to begin by critiquing others. Inevitably, participants begin to apply these insights to themselves.

Staff will find these insights valuable.

The Program provides much-needed models; it shows us people whose life experience is like that of the viewers -- real people who are struggling toward change.

CONTINUED, NEXT PG

THE PROGRAM IN BRIEF continued

WHAT'S IN THE PROGRAM?

- Three videos -- 34 to 40 minutes each.

When you purchase this course, you receive...

-Pre and Post Test Learning Gains Questions

- A complete Leader's Guide which includes...
 - Worksheets and readings you can reproduce for participants
 - Role Play Exercises
 - Staff Training Worksheets you can reproduce
 - Guidelines for a comprehensive 12 session program
 - Session ideas can be adapted for use with existing programs

A FLEXIBLE PROGRAM -- Adapts to Your Needs

- Use the materials for a brief introduction to the topic or for a full, comprehensive program:
 - Show a single video, or a segment of one.
 - Use a selected portion of any video, plus worksheets or readings to support other programs. Or...
 - Implement the complete, twelve-session program.
- Videos can be *inter-active* ; they are divided into sessions which can be viewed separately; they also contain optional pauses for discussion.

CONTINUED, NEXT PG

THE PROGRAM IN BRIEF continued

THE VIDEOS

Description: Convicted felons -- men and women -- interact with each other and Dr. Samenow as they uncover fundamental errors in thinking and explore their consequences. A compelling exploration of the subject for clients, students and staff. Rich material for in-depth discussion and study, including practical steps for change.

Inter-Active Options: Titles reading OPTIONAL PAUSE are provided at provocative moments in the videos -- to encourage active discussion. Each video is also divided into sessions, for those who want to view and discuss some portions separately. Guidelines for each session are provided.

A Summary of each video is in this guide. See Table of Contents.

Video Titles and Viewing Times:

Part I	What are Errors in Thinking?	40 minutes
Part II	Two Crucial Errors	34 minutes
Part III	Overcoming Errors in Thinking	39 minutes

THIS LEADER'S GUIDE and WORKBOOK...

...will make it easy to use the videos and plan each class or session.
You'll find...

- A summary of each video
- Questions to measure gains in learning referred to as “Learning Gains Questions”
- Guidelines and objectives for each session or class
- Discussion ideas
- Role Play Worksheets
- WORKSHEETS and readings you can reproduce for students or clients and for staff training

USING THIS PROGRAM

Welcome to *COMMITMENT TO CHANGE: Overcoming Errors in Thinking*.

You'll find the program is easy to use.

If you have limited time ...

...to present the program, you can simply show one or more parts of the videos and lead a brief discussion. Or use portions to support existing programs.

Ideas for short sessions are on the pages which follow.

Session times: 15 minutes to one hour. One or more sessions.

If you want a comprehensive program...

Conduct the Learning Gains Measures Pre-test

...you'll find guidelines for presenting up to twelve sessions -- for clients or staff.

Worksheets and reading assignments for students and staff training are included.

For extended study -- (if access to recommended books is practical in your situation) -
- you'll find suggested readings you can assign for each session.

Conduct the Learning Gains Measures Post-test

Time: up to 12 sessions; 30 minutes to 2 hours per session.

TOTAL PROGRAM TIME: 6 to 24 hours

How to Begin:

Turn to page 16; you'll find a summary of the first video. If you have time, view the video in advance.

Each video is divided into parts (Session 1, 2, etc.). Each part can be used for one session with your students/clients or staff, as described in this guide. In addition, each video has optional pauses for discussion.

The pages which follow provide guidelines for presenting that video -- learning objectives, discussion ideas, worksheets, readings and worksheets for staff training.

The first session is a preview, to prepare the group before the video is shown.
Session by session, this guide will support you in presenting this program.

HOW *ERRORS IN THINKING* RELATES TO OTHER APPROACHES AND PROGRAMS

This program can be used to support or complement many existing programs.

The heart of this approach -- taking personal responsibility for our decisions -- is a concept shared by many programs. Twelve-step programs identify "alcoholic thinking" or "stinking thinking" as a barrier to recovery. Addicts often say it was their "best" thinking that led them back to using, again and again. People in recovery are encouraged to take responsibility for their lives. As this program assists participants to become aware of their thinking, it can serve as a catalyst to initiate the process of accepting responsibility for choices. For staff training, special worksheets aid in identifying and understanding this issue.

Because personal change is a complex and challenging process, effective programs utilize a variety of approaches. Any treatment or educational program can benefit from this video-based program, because it provides participants a vivid opportunity to discover the key role thinking plays in shaping our lives.

People who know they need to change often fail to recognize what it is they can change. This program -- culminating in the third video -- provides a set of concrete, practical ways to begin -- to overcome errors in thinking -- and open the door to responsible choices and responsible living.

Although we cannot fully control what happens to us, we can decide how we will react -- the choices we make. Those choices make a crucial difference. Through the examples in the videos and the opportunities provided in the worksheets and readings, this program encourages an honest look in the mirror -- an unflinching look at our lives and our roles in creating them. This too, can serve as a valuable contribution and a powerful complement to existing programs.

This Guide and Workbook was written by

Stanton E. Samenow, Ph.D.
and
Ricklin E. Bussard

Special Contributions by Jamieson Parry
Edward Schuman, Executive Producer

© MCMXCIV BY EDWARD SCHUMAN. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

WHY A PROGRAM ABOUT ERRORS IN THINKING?

How can we make a difference in the lives of habitual offenders and those involved with substance abuse? How can we help youth and others who are at risk for destructive lifestyles? What interventions can have a meaningful effect?

In the 1960’s those questions were asked by Dr. Samuel Yochelson, a much-respected psychiatrist, and Dr. Stanton Samenow, a young clinical psychologist. To discover what interventions could make a meaningful difference, they embarked on the longest in-depth research-treatment program with habitual offenders ever conducted in North America. Their findings: many traditional approaches were not effective for this population. Over the years, a striking observation emerged: habitual criminals nearly always demonstrated a unique pattern of thinking. Frequently, they demonstrated obvious “errors in thinking”. They were “errors” because they did not accurately reflect reality -- and led to actions which created destructive consequences.

Could habitual offenders learn to “correct” these errors? And if their thinking did change, would it affect their behavior? Many more years of research yielded promising answers to both questions. When the desire to change is present, and given a disciplined program over time, it is possible for habitual offenders to change their lives. Many graduates of such programs -- which now exist in several countries -- are leading responsible, law-abiding lives.

The corrections community has embraced this approach in many ways -- along with educators, youth workers and other mental health and social services professionals. Programs and workshops are sponsored by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, NCI and Departments of Corrections in every state. Many professionals, publications and programs have built on the original research of Yochelson and Samenow. In response to numerous requests for a practical, step-by-step program, Dr. Samenow created this unique, video-based program.

ABOUT STANTON SAMENOW...

Dr. Stanton Samenow worked side by side with Dr. Samuel Yochelson, as they pioneered the research which uncovered the key role played by thinking patterns. Out of that work came the concept of “errors in thinking.” He is the author of several books, including *Inside the Criminal Mind*, *The Myth of the Out of Character Crime*, and *Before It’s Too Late*, a study of children and the development of criminal behavior. During his eight years as research psychologist at Saint Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, D.C., he co-authored the three-volume ground-breaking study, *The Criminal Personality*. He has been a member of the President’s Task Force on Crime and has held the position of Clinical Instructor in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at George Washington University Medical School. Dr. Samenow is widely-recognized as an authority on the evaluation and treatment of people who demonstrate criminal and destructive behaviors; he travels widely as a speaker, consultant and leader of workshops and onsite training.

Before you Proceed:

Have the participants take the Learning Gains Measure Exam on the following pages. (Don't hand out the answer key that follows)

At the conclusion of the entire 11 session program, have the participants take the test again so you can measure how much they have learned.

Learning Gains Measure Commitment to Change parts 1 – 3

1. According to the video, distorted thinking leads to
 - a. A person getting better at crime
 - b. Results no one wants
 - c. Prison
 - d. A great imagination
2. When we become aware of our own thoughts we will be able to
 - a. Change our thoughts
 - b. Explain our actions to others
 - c. Create good excuses
 - d. Ignore things
3. Errors in thinking are defined as
 - a. When we do math or English wrong
 - b. When we don't explain things well
 - c. Mistakes we make in thinking
 - d. Thinking clearly
4. In the video, motivation to change was defined as
 - a. Getting out of prison
 - b. Getting a new job
 - c. Wanting to reunite with our family
 - d. Wanting a new life
5. When a person believes they've been a victim, the error in thinking is
 - a. "I'm a victim of others"
 - b. "People take advantage of others"
 - c. "Other people are insensitive"
 - d. "I'm in control of my situation"
6. Believing we are a victim of others allows us to blame others for our actions, which takes away
 - a. Our power to change
 - b. Our rights as a citizen
 - c. The other person's responsibility
 - d. All of the above

7. When people believe they are a victim of their substance abuse
 - a. They are accepting the consequences of using drugs
 - b. They are denying they made the choice to use drugs in the first place
 - c. They are finding a way to keep using drugs
 - d. They are seeking out recovery
8. When we take responsibility for our actions
 - a. We alienate the people we love
 - b. We end up going to prison
 - c. We take control of our lives and we gain the power to change
 - d. We feel horrible
9. Dr. Samenow makes the point that none of us change unless we
 - a. Look in the mirror and don’t like what we see
 - b. Are forced by family
 - c. Are forced by law enforcement
 - d. Look at others to see how to live
10. The video points out that the way we think
 - a. Is a product of our upbringing
 - b. Creates our lives
 - c. Makes us unique
 - d. All of the above
11. Dr. Samenow makes the point that to live responsibly
 - a. People need support from their family
 - b. People need law enforcement to leave them alone
 - c. People need lots of positive reinforcement
 - d. People have to make an effort
12. To correct the error in thinking “I want it fast and easy,” we must be willing to
 - a. Stick with something over time
 - b. Start at the bottom
 - c. Sacrifice now for something better down the road
 - d. All of the above

13. Everyone has the choice of how we are to live, but we must accept
 - a. The consequences of our choices
 - b. That others may not approve
 - c. The disapproval of our family
 - d. All of the above
14. One way to change is to
 - a. Forget all your mistakes
 - b. Focus on your thoughts and find each error
 - c. Keep doing the same thing
 - d. Focus on others’ mistakes
15. The steps to correcting errors in thinking include
 - a. Remember where it leads
 - b. Eliminate the error
 - c. Explore other options
 - d. All of the above
16. It is insane to do the same things over and over again and expect
 - a. Different results
 - b. Others to approve
 - c. To convince others it is a good idea
 - d. All of the above
17. One error in thinking is, “It’s okay to shut off fear.” But the video reminds us that fear is there
 - a. To keep us motivated
 - b. To remind us of painful consequences of our actions
 - c. To remind us of how weak we are
 - d. To remove all doubt from our actions
18. The analogy for making a change was body building because both
 - a. Require help from a professional
 - b. Take a lot of time, a lot of patience, and a lot of effort
 - c. Require a regiment and a plan
 - d. Take us away from the things we love to do

19. The video proposes that the biggest obstacle to change is
- a. An unwillingness to picture ourselves in recovery
 - b. An unwillingness to convince our family it's needed
 - c. An unwillingness to leave our old lifestyle
 - d. All of the above
20. Dr. Samenow proposes that for change to stick, we must see change as
- a. A life or death decision
 - b. A choice that is up to us
 - c. A decision only we can make
 - d. All of the above

Certified Facilitator – Samenow’s Overcoming Errors in Thinking

KEY

1. B
2. A
3. C
4. D
5. A
6. A
7. B
8. C
9. A
10. B
11. D
12. D
13. A
14. B
15. D
16. A
17. B
18. A
19. A
20. A

SUMMARY OF THE VIDEO:

Part I - What are Errors in Thinking?

MINUTES
from start

INTRODUCTION

- 0 A fast-moving sequence to capture viewer interest. The "high" of crime and substance abuse --and the painful consequences -- are reflected in the words of men and women serving time.

Dr. Samenow is introduced, along with the basic concept of this program: *our actions begin with our thoughts; the way we think has a powerful influence on our lives.*

- 5 MAIN TITLE *Part I What are Errors in Thinking?*

- 6 **SESSION 1 Why Change?** (TITLE ON SCREEN)

Men and women serving time take a painfully honest look at their own lives -- and the costs of destructive behaviors. This realization can become a powerful source of motivation for change.

- 14 ***Focus on Thinking*** (TITLE ON SCREEN)

As they look at their own experiences, the group reveals the key role thinking plays in determining behavior.

- 16 **SESSION 2 An Error in Thinking** (TITLE ON SCREEN)

The Error: "I'm a victim of others."

The group watches a video of one of its members being interviewed. Dr. Samenow asks, "Do you see any errors in thinking?"

- 19 **PAUSE** for discussion as the interview ends and a TITLE ON SCREEN asks, ***Error in Thinking?***

In the spirited exchange that follows, the group identifies and fully explores the error. They acknowledge that many are victims -- yet that does not justify destructive acts. Thinking of ourselves as victims makes us feel helpless; we lose the power to change.

CONTINUED, NEXT PG

SUMMARY OF THE VIDEO CONTINUED

28 **SESSION 3** (TITLE ON SCREEN) **Error: "I'm a victim
of my substance abuse."**

29 **PAUSE** for discussion as the interview ends and a
TITLE ON SCREEN asks, ***Error in Thinking?***

Discussion by the group: Are drugs responsible for your
destructive acts? Who made the decision to use the drugs?

34 **SUMMARY**

When we take responsibility for our actions, we change from being a
victim to a person with choices; we gain the power to change.

A review of concepts in this video: why change?; our actions begin with our
thoughts; the role of errors in thinking; remaining a victim vs. taking
responsibility for our actions.

Leading the PREVIEW SESSION

(Before showing the Video)

Behind our Actions: THE WAY WE THINK

This session is designed to create a readiness to learn -- before seeing the video -- by introducing the key concept of this Program: *Our behavior is strongly influenced by our thinking. And we can change our thinking.*

Participants need not accept or fully understand it yet; the goal is to begin to grapple with it.

Choose the session or meeting time (below) you have available. Learning objectives and guidelines are provided for short and longer sessions.

For this session, the same guidelines -- and the same worksheet -- will be useful for staff training.

Write the objectives (below) on the chalkboard; they will assist in keeping focus.

Role Play –Objective-Play all roles

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify the relationship between behavior and thinking.

GUIDELINES:

- Write the key statements on a chalkboard, overhead, or flip chart:
Actions begin with thoughts.
Our behavior is strongly influenced by our thinking.
And we can change our thinking.
- Ask participants to discuss their own beliefs about the relationship between thought and behavior. (Be aware of their acceptance or rejection of the concept; you do not need to defend it.)
- Discuss the meaning of the word *choose* in the statement. Do we have control of our thoughts?
- If time allows, encourage those who agree to expand on their beliefs.
- If you prefer, begin by asking participants to complete the reading and/or worksheet for this session (next pages). Then draw on the discussion ideas presented here.

Leading the PREVIEW SESSION CONTINUED

- Again, without trying to defend this concept, you might use the following example:
“Let’s look at an example of this concept. Two people are standing near the edge of a cliff; one stays far back from the edge, while the other leans forward and looks down. What might explain the difference in their behavior?” Focus discussion on the different ways the two may have perceived their situation: one seeing it as dangerous and threatening, the other as a challenge and adventure.

1/2 to 1 hour session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Identify, through a written exercise, responsible thinking versus irresponsible thinking. Describe how behavior is affected by each.

GUIDELINES:

If you began with the discussion above, ask participants to complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session (see following pages).

If time allows, discuss their observations of the exercise. Keep the focus on the relationship between behavior and thinking.

Extended Learning Students or Staff

If practical in your situation, have participants read (or read passages to them) from the book,

The Criminal Personality, Vol. 1, pp 251-255 and pp 359-360
(See *Books for Extended Learning*, page 76).

After reading these pages, have participants write:

- A. **Objectively:** a half-page or more (about 75 to 100 words) describing what Yochelson and Samenow stated about the “criminal mind” and how that relates to criminal behavior. Remind participants to be objective and describe what the authors stated, rather than stating a personal opinion.
- B. **Subjectively:** A half page or more (approximately 75 to 150 words) stating the participants’ personal beliefs about the material they read. Do they agree or disagree, like or dislike?

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

At the conclusion of these assignments, encourage participants to discuss their observations and feelings about this material (can be used as a homework assignment).

READING for PREVIEW SESSION

A Key to Change: YOUR THOUGHTS

The good news is, we can change. None of us needs to be a prisoner of our thoughts or our behaviors.

Think about the last 24 hours; can you remember a specific situation when you felt angry inside? Think about what you said -- what you did. What happened as a result -- what were the consequences? What would have happened if you had acted on your thoughts (for instance, lashed out in anger), rather than trying to control yourself?

Can you think of a recent event that you would like to re-live, if you could, in order to respond to it differently? What trouble resulted? What could you have done differently?

Think of a recent temptation to do something that you knew was wrong. Can you remember what you thought before you decided what to do? What was the temptation? What actually happened (did you get high, curse at someone, punch someone, take something that wasn't yours)? Looking back, how could you have handled that temptation differently? Could there have been a different result? Would the result have been better or worse? Why?

Consider the following possibilities:

Some thoughts lead to results we don’t want. When we think, “I’ll show him!” or “Nobody does that to me and gets away with it,” there’s a good chance we’ll end up in trouble. Thoughts that lead to unwanted trouble can be called “errors in thinking.”

When we become aware of our thoughts, we can catch the errors before we act. We can stop and remember the trouble our action might bring. People do get hurt; everything has a price.

We can be aware that, in the long run, we -- and those we care about -- pay a heavy price for our destructive acts. We can change our thoughts. We can stop and think of other ways to handle the situation.

When you change your thinking, you change what you actually end up doing. You become able to avoid the temptation to take a harmful shortcut -- able to accomplish something of value you can be proud of. You will gain the ability to handle situations calmly -- without feeling put-down or angry. You gain the ability to put yourself in the place of another person -- to avoid causing others -- and yourself -- unnecessary pain.

It all begins when you stop and catch your thoughts -- before you act.

WORKSHEET for PREVIEW SESSION Student and Staff

Becoming Aware of Your Thoughts

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Human beings do not change easily. Change is difficult to understand and even harder to apply. Are there any keys that can help us unlock this very complex problem? After reading the handout, challenge yourself to be honest as you answer the following:

Think of a recent situation in which you became angry. Describe what happened and how you reacted. Why do you believe you became angry?

What were the consequences of your actions?

Thinking back now, what could you have done or said differently that might have had better results?

What could you have said or done that would have made the results worse -- for you and others?

What thoughts caused you to act as you did? Can you remember what you were thinking -- what led you to act?

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

In your opinion, was this responsible thinking? Was it likely to produce results you wanted -- in the long run? Please explain.

Leading SESSION ONE

“Why Change?”

Show and discuss Video Part I from the beginning through the *“Why Change?”* sequence (14 minutes total). See discussion ideas below.

Choose the session or meeting time (below) you have available. Learning objectives and guidelines are provided for short and longer sessions.

STAFF TRAINING: For this session, the same guidelines and worksheet will be useful for staff training.

Write the objectives (below) on the chalkboard; they will assist in keeping focus.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify the painful effects of irresponsible thinking (thinking errors)
-- short-term and long-term effects.

GUIDELINES:

Suggested Discussion:

- What are the people in the video saying about change?
- What did they say about the “high” or feeling of excitement associated with acting irresponsibly?
- What did they say about change and why a person would want to change?
- The choices they made created painful results. What were those results?
How painful were they -- and why?

You need not justify or defend the concepts; let the DVD’s speak for themselves.
You may want to ask that some questions be held until after viewing the entire series.

CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE...

Leading SESSION ONE CONTINUED

1/2 Hour to 1 Hour Session

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Identify, through a written exercise, specific painful effects of irresponsible thinking. Describe possible motivations for change.

GUIDELINES:

After completing the discussion above, instruct participants to complete the reading assignment and worksheet (next two pages). Afterwards, if time allows, discuss their observations of the exercise.

Extended Learning Students or Staff

If practical in your situation, have participants read the following:
(See *Books for Extended Learning* page 76.)

Inside the Criminal Mind, chapter 13
The Criminal Personality, Vol. 1, Chapter 3; Vol. 2, Chapter 3.

After reading, have participants write:

A. **Objectively:** a half page or more (about 75-150 words) describing what Yochelson and Samenow stated about the criminal mind and the relationship to criminal behavior. Remind participants to be objective and describe what the authors stated, not the student’s personal opinion.

B. **Subjectively:** a half page or more describing the student’s personal beliefs about the material. Did they agree or disagree, like or dislike?

After completing the above, encourage discussion of observations and feelings about this material (can be used as a homework assignment).

READING for SESSION ONE

Why Change?

In the video, you could see that each person who spoke was quite different from the others. When we look around us, we see that each person has a different approach to life: some are loners, others go with the group; some are easy-going, others are not...and so on.

Yet we seldom decide how we're going to be. We just get up each day and do what we've always done -- without giving it much thought. We don't think about our way of doing things or whether we're satisfied with ourselves -- until we hit a dead end.

When we find ourselves in painful situations -- over and over -- some of us eventually begin to think, "What am I doing wrong?"

But even when we find ourselves in serious trouble again and again, it's tempting to blame others. People who are in frequent conflict with family, spouse, the people around them or police, courts and prisons, often believe they've had a "raw deal" -- and live in a state of anger and self-pity.

Some of us have to experience a great deal of pain before we begin to look at ourselves. The result is that we lose what matters most to us: control over our lives. We find ourselves locked up, away from children, family and all we value. What can we say to wives and husbands who suffer pain that we caused? How can we explain it to our children? To ourselves?

The fact is this: only when we're faced with the painful consequences of our behavior do many of us make major, lasting changes. Even then, people promise themselves or others they will change -- only to discover that old habits die hard. It takes a strong desire and a long-term effort to change lifelong habits and ways of thinking.

Many return to prison again and again for this reason: they are dissatisfied with their situation -- but not with themselves. They cannot see how they helped to create their troubles. They see no reason to change.

When people have the courage to take a long look at their lives and their own part in creating them -- they may make a commitment to change. When people are willing to see what they've done -- to become disgusted with their own behavior -- with the pain it has caused so many --then change is possible.

The good news is that each one of us can make a series of choices which will lead us in new directions. None of us need be victims of our past or of our own personality. Change is possible. Many have changed their lives.

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Change may be one of the most difficult things that human beings ever attempt. But for those who are willing to put in the long-term effort -- willing to stick with it when times are hard -- change is a practical goal.

ROLE-PLAYS SESSION ONE

Error in Thinking: WHY CHANGE?

In this session Dr. Samenow helps the participants reflect on what might motivate them to change. We must want to change for it to happen. One way to increase motivation is to practice focusing on our reasons for changing.

Like any skill, to be good at thinking clearly and reacting to situations and people in a healthy way, we must practice. The following role-play allows you to reflect on why you may want to change.

Think of a person you might be discussing this situation with and write out a script you can use to practice role-playing these new healthy ways of thinking about why you want to change.

Other person: What was so bad about the past that you want to change it?

You:

Other Person: How do you see yourself right now?

You:

Other Person: How do you see yourself in the future?

You:

Other Person: What do you want to be like as a person?

You:

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Other Person: What do you want to be like as an employee?

You:

Other Person: What do you want to be like as a friend?

You:

Now practice the script with a partner and be prepared to share the role-play with the entire group.

WORKSHEET for SESSION ONE

Error in Thinking: Why Change?

(If necessary, use an additional page)

For people who want to change their lives, an important first step is to decide whether they want to change any aspect of themselves. No matter how difficult change may seem, it helps to remember that, with time, we all change anyway. Will you choose to become more bitter, more hard and less trusted by others? Or will you decide to bring out the best within you?

The following questions are designed to assist you in exploring this issue. Here are some possible indicators of the need for change:

Yes ____ No ____

Within the last year, have you thought about stopping any irresponsible activities or behaviors? Please describe the reason you wanted to stop. If you answered no, look around you now. Is this the life you want for yourself? If you stay the same, will life give you anything else? Explain:

Yes ____ No ____

Were you successful at stopping any of those activities or behaviors? Please describe the ones you seem to have the most difficulty in stopping or preventing yourself from returning to after a period of abstinence.

Yes ____ No ____

Have there been painful consequences in your life due to the irresponsible activities or behaviors you have described? Please describe those consequences.

Yes ____ No ____

Certified Facilitator – Samenow’s Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Are you really interested in changing some of the behaviors you have identified?
Please describe your personal reasons (not what others say) for wanting to change or for not
wanting to change:

Leading SESSION TWO

Error In Thinking: "I'M A VICTIM OF OTHERS."

Show and discuss the Session 2 portion of Video Part I.

STAFF TRAINING: The same guidelines are appropriate for staff; a special worksheet for staff is on page 25

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify why the belief, "I'm a victim of others," is an error in thinking that leads to the justification of irresponsible behavior -- and to painful consequences.

GUIDELINES:

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION after viewing:

- Would you agree that some people in the Video seemed to think of themselves as victims? What did they say they were victims of?
- How did they use this attitude to justify irresponsible and inappropriate behaviors?
- How were other people harmed by this attitude? How were they harmed themselves?
- How can you take charge of your life -- if you believe your actions are the result of what someone else did to you? Discuss.

Suggestion: help participants to understand the implications of seeing yourself as a victim. It is true that many of us have been victimized. But if a person sees his actions now as the result of what someone else did to him, the past still controls him. He remains a victim -- helpless to change. However, if he decides that -- despite what happened to him -- he can make choices now -- then he's free in an important way; change is possible.

CONTINUED, NEXT PG

Leading SESSION TWO CONTINUED

1/2 Hour to 1 Hour Session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify, through a written exercise, how this belief (“I’m a victim of others”) can be used to justify irresponsible behaviors. Have you held this belief? What was the result?

GUIDELINES:

After the discussion above, have participants complete the reading and worksheet for this session (next two pages). If time allows, discuss their observations of the exercise.

STAFF TRAINING:

Use the same reading assignment and discussion questions. Assign staff worksheet, page 37.

Extended Learning Students or Staff

If practical in your situation, have participants read the following:
(See *Books for Extended Learning*, last page of this Guide.)

The Criminal Personality, Vol. 1, pp 366-369
Before It’s Too Late, pp 100-110.

After reading, have them write:

A. **Objectively:** a half page or more (about 75-150 words) describing what Yochelson/Samenow stated about the “I’m a victim” thinking error and its relationship to criminal behavior. Remind students to be objective; describe what the authors stated, not the student’s opinion.

B. **Subjectively:** a half page or more describing the student’s personal beliefs about the authors’ ideas. Did they agree or disagree, like or dislike?

After completing the above, encourage discussion of observations and feelings about this material (can be used as a homework assignment).

READING for SESSION TWO

Error In Thinking: "I'M A VICTIM OF OTHERS."

At times we're all tempted to blame others for things we've done. Have you ever pointed your finger at someone and said, "They made me do that. I didn't have a choice." Think of the excuses you've made and the people you've blamed.

Blaming is especially tempting after doing something wrong -- to avoid getting into trouble. "My boss was unfair to me, so I showed him a thing or two and quit." "My girlfriend was on my back, so I left the house and got drunk." With thoughts like these, we try to justify our actions by blaming someone else.

Sometimes, unfortunate things do happen to us -- and what occurs really isn't our fault. Then we feel justified in blaming someone else for what happened. But did you ever stop and think, "I am responsible for making a situation even worse." The important part about life is not what happens to us, but how we decide to react to it. How do we handle life and it's inevitable ups and downs? Although the boss treated you unfairly, ask yourself, "Did I do anything to help bring this on?" Even if you did nothing inappropriate, ask yourself, "Did I respond to this unfair situation in a way that made things better -- or did I make them worse?"

It's easy to blame our parents, our friends, our wife or husband, our boss, the weather, or just plain bad luck. Have you ever known this blaming to make things better?

Your life can begin to change when you stop thinking of yourself as a victim of what life dishes out -- when you think of yourself as a person who has choices, who can learn how to deal effectively and responsibly with life's many challenges. It takes a lot of courage and self awareness to shoulder responsibilities -- to stop blaming others.

It is true that many of us have been victimized. But if a person sees his actions now as the result of what someone else did to him, the past controls him. He remains a victim -- helpless to change. On the other hand, if he decides that -- despite what happened to him --

he can make choices now -- then he’s free to choose a different path -- and change is possible.

ROLE-PLAYS FOR SESSION TWO

Error in Thinking: “I’m a Victim of Others.”

In this session you watched an interview of one of the participants which illustrated a thinking error we often make. One way to avoid falling into thinking errors is to practice thinking and reacting differently to situations and people in our lives.

Like any skill, to be good at thinking clearly and reacting to situations and people in a healthy way, requires practice. The following role-play allows you to practice healthy responses to situations that in the past may have triggered your thinking errors.

Think of a situation in which you believe you were a victim. Write about that below.

Now think of a healthier way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind that there may have been situations out of our control which caused damage to us either emotionally or physically. No one is suggesting that this is not true. Instead, think about what you can learn from that situation so you can make better choices in the future. For example, one person who had a distant father used this experience to be sure he was involved with his children, attending all their sporting events and school activities as well as being home for dinner as much as possible. Think about how a negative experience can help you make better choices in the future. Write about that below.

Now think of a person you might be discussing this situation with and write out a script you can use to practice role-playing these new healthy ways of thinking, reacting, and responding to the old situation. A prompt by the “other person” has been provided to get you started.

Other person: I hear you had a rough time of it?

You:

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Other Person: What did you learn from the experience?

You:

Other Person: How can you use this experience to change your future?

You:

Other Person:

You:

Other Person:

You:

Now practice the script with a partner and be prepared to share the role-play with the entire group.

WORKSHEET for SESSION TWO

Error In Thinking: “I’M A VICTIM OF OTHERS.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Although we can all point to something or someone whom we believe has victimized us, at what point do we take responsibility for our actions? When do we say, “Despite what happened, I make the choices now.” The following statements are designed to assist you in exploring this question:

Yes____ No____

Recall a time when someone or something took advantage of you. Does that situation still bother you today? (Check Yes or No, above.) Please describe what or who it is that still bothers you today.

Yes____ No____

I believe I would have been a different person today if what I described above had not happened to me. Please describe why you do or why you do not believe this has affected how you treat yourself and others.

Yes____ No____

Although I may or may not know why I have personal problems with certain responsibilities, I am willing to admit that I need to become more responsible for myself (check Yes or No). Please describe those areas of your life where you feel you could become more responsible.

WORKSHEET FOR STAFF TRAINING

SESSION TWO

Error In Thinking: “I’M A VICTIM OF OTHERS.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Those of us who deal with people in the change process have encountered as many excuses for behavior as there are people who need to change. Many of us could point to something or somebody that once victimized us -- but at some point we began taking responsibility for our own lives. If we are willing to take control of our lives, why should we expect any less from those we deal with?

What are some of the reasons the inmates in the video gave for seeing themselves as victims?

What actions or problems in their lives did they blame others for?

Why is it an error to continue to think of yourself as a victim -- blaming others for your actions?

What did some of the inmates and Dr. Samenow say about personal responsibilities?

How can you assist a person to begin the process of taking responsibility for his or her actions?

Leading SESSION THREE

Error In Thinking: “I’M A VICTIM OF MY SUBSTANCE ABUSE.”

Show and discuss the “Session 3” portion of Video Part I.

STAFF TRAINING: Follow same guidelines; the worksheet for this session is appropriate for staff as well.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Identify why the belief, "I’m a victim of my substance abuse,” is an error in thinking. Describe how it leads people to justify irresponsible behavior.

GUIDELINES:

Suggested Discussion:

- What did some of the people in the video say they were the victims of?
- How did they justify irresponsible and inappropriate behaviors with this attitude?
- How were other people harmed by this attitude? How were the people themselves harmed?

1/2 Hour to 1 Hour Session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify, through a written exercise, specific ways this belief is used to justify irresponsible behaviors.

GUIDELINES:

After completing the discussion above, ask participants to complete the reading and worksheet (next two pages).

If time allows, discuss their observations of the exercise

Leading SESSION THREE CONTINUED

Extended Learning Students or Staff

If practical in your situation, choose selections appropriate for your participants from the following books:

"Inside the Criminal Mind" Chapter 2 or Chapter 8

"The Criminal Personality" hardback edition Vol. 2 pages 196-201

Vol. 3: Any selection. Entire book relates to this issue.

After reading, have them write:

A. **Objectively:** a half page or more (about 75-150 words) describing what Yochelson and Samenow stated about the “I’m a victim” thinking error and its relationship to criminal behavior. Remind students to be objective; describe what the authors stated, not the student’s personal opinion.

B. **Subjectively:** a half page or more (75 to 100 words) describing the student’s personal beliefs about the material. Did they agree or disagree, like or dislike?

After completing the above, encourage discussion of observations and feelings about this material (can be used as a homework assignment).

READING for SESSION THREE

Error In Thinking: “I’M A VICTIM OF MY SUBSTANCE ABUSE.”

In the video, Dr. Samenow asked, “Are there things you did on drugs that you would not have done if you were not on drugs?” Some spoke of committing crimes, cheating, lying -- and said they would never do these things when sober. They seemed to be saying, “It wasn’t me. It was the drugs.” Drugs bring out what already resides within the user.

It was pointed out that many people use and abuse alcohol and other drugs -- and yet do not commit crime or violent acts.

The group was asked to look honestly at themselves: “Look at what you have done -- and what you were capable of doing. Look at your choice to continue to do those things.”

One student answered, “You can’t get better if you lie to yourself.”

Another said -- after some resistance -- “I guess I’m not owning up to the fact that it’s my decision from the very beginning...knowing that if I get high I’m going to do these things....and then going ahead and getting high anyway...”

He continued, “I completely neglected the fact that I was the one who chose to put the dope in my arm in the first place.”

Another person said that drinking and drugs allowed him to “...run and hide from my emotions. Instead of having to face the reality of my actions, I buried them in a substance.”

Dr. Samenow makes it clear: “If we continue to think of ourselves as victims, change is impossible. We are always going to be thinking of what happened to us, what somebody else did or did not do for us. We never really start to look at ourselves.”

Only when we look honestly at ourselves -- can change begin.

ROLE-PLAYS SESSIONS THREE AND FOUR

Error in Thinking: *“I’m a Victim of My Substance Abuse.”*

In this session you watched an interview of one of the participants which illustrated a thinking error we often make. One way to avoid falling into thinking errors is to practice thinking and reacting differently to situations and people in our lives.

Like any skill, to be good at thinking clearly and reacting to situations and people in a healthy way, we must practice. The following role-play allows you to practice healthy responses to situations that in the past may have triggered your thinking errors.

Think of a situation in which you believe you behaved a certain way because you were under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Write about that below.

Now think of a healthier way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind the idea that we choose to use drugs and alcohol and with that choice, we also choose the consequences of using drugs or alcohol. Write about that below.

Now think of a person you might be discussing this situation with and write a script you can use to practice role-playing these new healthy ways of thinking, reacting, and responding to the old situation. A prompt by “you” has been provided to get you started.

You: I’m responsible for ...

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Other Person:

You:

Other Person: How can you use this experience to change your future?

You:

Other Person:

You:

Other Person:

You:

Now practice the script with a partner and be ready to share with the group.

WORKSHEET for SESSION THREE Student and Staff

“I’m a Victim of My Substance Abuse.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Where do criminal thoughts come from? Are alcohol and drugs responsible?
Why doesn’t everyone have such thoughts? Is the individual who makes the choice to use alcohol or drugs responsible?

The questions below are designed to help you explore these issues.

(For staff: Questions designed to assist you in helping clients to explore these issues.)

Have you ever done things -- while under the influence of alcohol or drugs -- that surprised or embarrassed you? Things that bothered you later, when you thought back on it? Please explain.

Have you had more than one of these experiences? Yes____ No____

Have you ever said to yourself, “That’s it, never again,” and later found yourself doing it again? Yes____ No____

In your opinion, what are some of the reasons that you continued to use alcohol or drugs, even after having these unpleasant experiences? Please explain.

Do you believe you are responsible for putting yourself into these painful situations? Yes____ No____ Please explain why you believe you are -- or are not -- responsible for these choices.

Leading SESSION FOUR

"I'm Responsible for my Choices."

This session is designed to summarize and deepen the concepts raised in video Part I. The session can be used to complete viewing of Part I, or it can take place as a separate session, after viewing is completed.

STAFF TRAINING: Follow the same guidelines. Staff members can use the worksheet designed for students if it is kept as a personal exercise and not seen by others.

If time has been limited, use this session for further discussion of questions and issues from previous meetings.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify how taking responsibility for personal choices provides hope -- and an understanding that change is possible.

GUIDELINES:

Suggested Discussion:

- What did some of the incarcerated offenders say about the choices they had made and their responsibility for those choices?
- What choices did they believe they could have made differently?
- Is change possible?
- If change is not possible, what is the alternative?
- If change is possible, is it easy? Explain.

CONTINUED, NEXT PG

Leading SESSION FOUR CONTINUED

1/2 Hour to 1 Hour Session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify, through a written exercise, how making responsible choices results in changed behaviors which are responsible.

GUIDELINES:

After the discussion above, have the participants complete the reading assignment and worksheet (next two pages).

If time allows, discuss their observations of the exercise. You need not defend these concepts; instead, refer participants to the content of the video or readings. If you have comments or questions, feel free to write the authors (see last page of this guide).

-

READING for SESSION FOUR

I'm Responsible for my Choices."

People in the video talked about things they did while under the influence of drugs and alcohol -- then went on to say, "These things are not part of my makeup." They seemed to suggest that drugs "made them" take wrong or irresponsible actions.

What do you think about this attitude? We all have a need to see ourselves in a favorable light; are they blaming drugs so they won't have to see the destructive things they've done?

What makes someone a good person? Make a list in your mind of those characteristics that make you a good person (for example, good deeds, religion, charitable acts, certain things you would never do, etc.). What, if anything, do you dislike about yourself?

Think about a number of irresponsible, law-breaking behaviors in which you have participated. Include the number of times your actions have harmed others, even if these actions were not unlawful. Is it difficult to look squarely at this list? Would you like to see yourself in a good light? Do some of your actions show others a very different picture?

In order to rationalize to yourself this conflict between your actions versus your self image, have you ever blamed drugs, alcohol, circumstances, past injustices or other people for your behavior? Do drugs commit crimes or do people commit crimes? Are people usually able to force you to do something that you don't want to do?

Looking into the mirror requires courage and a desire to be totally honest with ourselves. We would all like to see ourselves in a favorable way, but in order to change, we must be willing to see ourselves as we actually are -- both good and bad. Looking at the painful reality will allow us to recognize those things we don't like to see -- the harm we have done to others, to ourselves -- and what we need to change.

WORKSHEET for SESSION FOUR

Student
(Staff: personal
use only)

“I’m Responsible for my Choices.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

One of the most difficult things for any of us to do is to acknowledge our faults -- to look into the “mirror of honest self assessment” and remember the painful results of our irresponsible behaviors. Yet -- if we do not do this -- change is unlikely. Whether you are a student, group member or staff person being trained in these concepts, the following exercise is designed to help you use this process -- and uncover a possible alternative to behaviors which are self-destructive.

1. “Acknowledge your faults.” Briefly describe some of your major faults which continue to cause harm to yourself and others.

2. “Excuses must be thrown out.” Briefly describe some of the major excuses you have used in the past, which prevented you from taking personal responsibility for those actions.

3. “Fear of consequences can deter us from irresponsible actions.” Briefly describe what painful consequences you fear might happen if you don’t change the faults you have listed above.

4. “Consider the harm you will do to others if you don’t change.” Briefly describe how others might be harmed in the future, if you do not work on changing these faults.

5. “Effort is required.” Briefly describe how you plan to address these faults on a daily basis; what can you do when you feel discouraged? How can you measure success in small ways?

SUMMARY OF THE VIDEO:

Part II - Two Crucial Errors

MINUTES
from start

0 INTRODUCTION

3 MAIN TITLE *Part II Two Crucial Errors*

4 **SESSION 5** *Error in Thinking: "I want it fast and easy."*
(TITLE ON SCREEN)

Option: Pause here and challenge viewers to identify the thinking error in the next brief sequence.

5 **PAUSE** (TITLE ON SCREEN:) *Error in Thinking?*

This pause provides an opportunity for viewers to identify the error -- and to be actively involved.

THE ERROR IS EXPLORED; RELATED ISSUES DISCUSSED.

10 **PAUSE** (TITLE ON SCREEN)

Option: Pause here to discuss the consequences of this error and the issues raised in this sequence.

CONSEQUENCES OF THIS ERROR ARE SHARPLY REVEALED.

14 **PAUSE** (TITLE ON SCREEN:) *"I want it fast and easy."*

This pause is an opportunity to deepen discussion of the consequences created by this error.

15 **SESSION 6** *Where Does This Thinking Lead?* (TITLE ON SCREEN)

Dramatic personal statements: the consequences of thinking, "I want it fast and easy."

Dr. Samenow provides a realistic example of the responsible alternative: sustained effort.

CONTINUED.....

SUMMARY OF THE VIDEO: *Part II* CONTINUED

MINUTES
from start

- 19 **SESSION 7** *Error in Thinking: "No One Was Hurt."*
(TITLE ON SCREEN)
- An interview with a woman serving time reveals another crucial error.
- 22 The error is explored. An interview with a man serving time reveals the same error. Discussion of emotional injury to victims. The offender and his family are hurt in many ways.
- 29 **SESSION 8** *Who is Hurt?*
(TITLE ON SCREEN)
- Convicted offenders reveal the devastating circle of hurt created by irresponsible thinking and action.
- 31 Summary and introduction of *Practical Steps for Change* (the first letter of each line spells FREE) -- to be explored more fully in Part III.

Leading SESSION FIVE

“I Want it Fast and Easy.”

Show and discuss the Session 5 portion of Video Part II.

STAFF TRAINING: The same guidelines will be useful; a special worksheet for staff is provided (page 56).

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify how thinking, "I want it fast and easy," is an error that leads to inappropriate and irresponsible behavior.

-

GUIDELINES:

To explore the objective above, questions like these will be helpful:

Suggested Discussion:

- In the video, what are some of the reasons given for believing it's okay to "get it fast and easy?"
- What issues in the video created disagreement?
- Where does this thinking error lead? What are the long-term consequences? Can you give actual examples from your own observations?
- Why would someone choose to "get it" the “hard way,” deciding to earn what they want, through effort over time?

CONTINUED, NEXT PG

Leading SESSION FIVE CONTINUED_

1/2 Hour to 1 Hour Session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify, through a written exercise, how this error influences people to take the "easy" way, regardless of the harm done to self and others.

GUIDELINES:

After the discussion above, instruct participants to complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

If time allows, discuss their observations of the exercise. Keep the focus on the relationship between behavior and thinking. Again, you do not have to justify or defend the concepts; let the videos speak for themselves. You may want to ask that some questions be held until after viewing the entire series.

Extended Learning Students or Staff

If practical in your situation, have participants read the following (or read passages to them) from the books:

"The Criminal Personality," Vol. 1, pages 399 - 401, Vol. 2, pages 207 - 218

"Inside the Criminal Mind," Chapter 6, pages 85 - 93

"Before It's Too Late," pages 75-87

(See *Books for Extended Learning*, last page of this Guide.)

After reading, have them write:

A. Objectively: a half page or more (about 75-150 words) describing what Yochelson and Samenow stated about the "criminal mind" and how that relates to criminal behavior.

Remind students to be objective; describe what the authors stated, not the student's opinion.

B. Subjectively: a half page or more describing the student's personal beliefs about the material they read. Did they agree or disagree, like or dislike?

After completing the above, encourage discussion of observations and feelings about this material (can be used as a homework assignment).

READING for SESSION FIVE

"I Want it Fast and Easy."

Think about all the times in your life when you've said, "I want what I want now, and I'll do whatever it takes to get it **NOW**." You think to yourself, "Why work at a job I don't like every day for pay that is far too low?"

How tempting it is to go for whatever will put a lot of money in your pocket fast. It's far more exciting to outsmart and overcome others by taking what you want -- or by "conning" them into giving it to you.

What do you think about some of the people you grew up with, members of your own family who have gone to the same job every day, month after month, year after year? Do you believe that they are suckers and that you deserve better than that?

What has this kind of thinking cost you? What has been the cost of your actions to others, including your family?

Think of the people you know who have chosen to make a "big score." How many of them are dead, in prison, or headed in those directions?

What is there in your life that has taken a lot of effort, that you are truly proud of?

People who are successful in life generally do a lot of things that they find boring or unpleasant. They have a goal, and they stick with it. They are willing to work hard, put up with difficulties and work toward solving their problems. They are willing to develop self-discipline and apply steady effort in working toward their goals. Even if they have setbacks, instead of getting angry, hurting someone or quitting, they don't give up. Instead, they try to learn from their mistakes and continue to struggle.

We all have a choice. Will you choose the fast and easy way, the way that is temporary, putting you at risk of harming others and ending up in jail, injured or dead?

If you choose to live responsibly, you will have to work hard and put up with people and conditions you don't always like. But if you stick with it, you can become good at something legitimate. You can go to sleep each night, knowing that you have not hurt innocent people and that no one is looking to arrest you. You can create a life that you and the people you care about can be proud of.

Or you can choose to think, "I want it fast and easy." We all have a choice.

ROLE-PLAYS SESSIONS FIVE AND SIX

Error in Thinking: *“I want it fast and easy.”*

In this session Dr. Samenow used a participant’s interview to illustrate a thinking error we often fall into. One way to avoid repeating thinking errors is to practice thinking and reacting differently to situations and people in our lives.

Like any skill, to be good at thinking clearly and reacting to situations and people in a healthy way, we must practice. The following role-play allows you to practice healthy responses to situations that in the past may have triggered your thinking errors.

Think of a situation in which you wanted to take a shortcut to meeting your life goals, such as having a nice car or having the amount of money you felt you needed to be “successful” and write a brief description of that situation below.

Now think of a more constructive way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind that reaching any goal takes time and several steps. You might also want to think about how accomplishments you worked hard to attain are often more valuable. Write about that below.

Now think of a person you might be discussing this situation with and write out a script you can use to practice role-playing these new healthy ways of thinking, reacting, and responding to the old situation. A prompt by the “other person” has been provided to get you started.

Other person: Did you see my nice, new car?

You:

Other Person:

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

You:

Other Person:

You:

Other Person:

You:

Other Person:

You:

Other Person:

You:

Now practice the script with a partner and be prepared to share the role-play with the entire group.

WORKSHEET for SESSION FIVE

Student

"I Want it Fast and Easy."

(If necessary, use an additional page)

After reading, "I Want it Fast and Easy," we encourage you to explore the following issues fully and honestly:

If you could see a video of your life, would you see yourself choosing the "fast, easy way?" Please describe situations where this happened the most.

Please complete the following statements:

People who get up every day, go to work, pay their bills and stay out of trouble are...

Most of the time, when I have chosen to go the "fast and easy way," it has resulted in...

WORKSHEET FOR STAFF TRAINING

SESSION FIVE

Error In Thinking: "I WANT IT FAST AND EASY."

(If necessary, use an additional page)

The following questions provide an opportunity to explore this subject in depth -- and may suggest strategies for encouraging change:

Do you at times, find yourself committing this error in thinking? Yes ____ No ____

If yes, please give a brief example. If no, describe why you choose not to commit this error.

What prevents you from going to an extreme with this error, so that you would commit crimes or harm others?

Imagine that you are working with an individual who says, "I don't have to worry about a job or education. If I ever need those things, I'll find a way to get them." How would you confront this person objectively (hold the person accountable without being judgmental or "taking it personally")?

How could you encourage that person to change?

Leading SESSION SIX

Where Does this Thinking Lead?

This session is designed to encourage participants to look at the probable or real results of the previous error, "I want it fast and easy."

Show and discuss the Session 6 portion of the video called, "Where Does This Thinking Lead?" (see page 45, *Summary of the Video, Part II*).

STAFF TRAINING: The same guidelines will be useful; a special worksheet for staff is provided (page 61).

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify the probable or real results of thinking,
"I want it fast and easy."

GUIDELINES:

Suggested Discussion:

- In the video, what problems did inmates describe as a result of this thinking?
- What problems did most of them share in common?
- How were other people -- family, friends and society in general -- affected by this thinking error?
- What are some other problems that can arise as a result of this thinking error?

CONTINUED, NEXT PG

Leading SESSION SIX CONTINUED_

1/2 Hour to 1 Hour Session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Through a written exercise, identify how this error can create problems in anyone’s life.

GUIDELINES:

Complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

If time allows, discuss students' observations of the exercise. Keep the focus on the relationship between behavior and thinking.

READING for SESSION SIX

Where Does This Thinking Lead?

Several people in the video admitted that this error in thinking has led to suffering in their lives.

Those results included: years of wasted living; dropping out of school or not seeking further education; never holding a job longer than a few months; "freedom" from responsibilities (which eventually resulted in loss of personal freedom); never struggling for anything and so never achieving anything of lasting value; loss of self-respect -- and harm to self, family and friends.

Dr. Samenow observed that all of those problems can be a result of thinking, "I want that; I want it NOW; I'm going to get it now." The focus, he said, is only on the present.

The "fast and easy way" does have temporary benefits. You may get what you want, quickly. But in the long run, the "fast way" leads to a life filled with pain. The men and women in the video demonstrate -- through their lives -- what these costs are. Several of them believe the price is too high to keep paying.

WORKSHEET for SESSION SIX

Student

Where Does This Thinking Lead?

(If necessary, use an additional page)

"What goes around, comes around." "As you sow, so shall you reap." Even in ancient times, people spoke of the consequences of irresponsible thinking.

The following statements are designed to assist you in exploring this issue:

Please put a check mark next to the negative results which would apply to your life:

- ☐ Never held a legal job longer than a few months or a few years (circle one)
- ☐ Months or years of wasted living (circle one)
- ☐ Dropped out of school and/or chose to not pursue further education or job skill training (prior to entering a program or penal institution)
- ☐ Pursued freedom from personal responsibilities -- which has resulted in losing personal freedom
- ☐ Never really struggled for anything, resulting in never achieving anything of value.
- ☐ Loss of self-respect
- ☐ My actions have harmed those who really care for me
- ☐ I have lost my fear of consequences.

If some of the statements above apply to you, how painful -- for you and others -- have been the results? Please explain:

What are some things you can do today to change those negative results in your life?

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

What are some plans you can make for your future that will eliminate a repeat of these negative results?

WORKSHEET FOR STAFF TRAINING

SESSION SIX

Where Does This Thinking Lead?

(If necessary, use an additional page)

"What goes around, comes around." "As you sow, so shall you reap." Even in ancient times, people spoke of the consequences of irresponsible thinking.

Please list the eight negative consequences described in the reading assignment for this session.

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

Why would someone continue to behave in a way that would continually create the consequences listed above?

What are some things you can do to encourage or motivate a person to change on a daily basis? Please explain:

What goals could help a person with these problems to sustain long-term improvements?

Certified Facilitator – Samenow’s Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Leading SESSION SEVEN

Error in Thinking: "NO ONE WAS HURT."

This session is designed to create awareness of this common and important error.

Show and discuss the Session 7 portion of Video Part II. (See page 45, *Summary of the VIDEO - Part II.*)

STAFF TRAINING: Use same guidelines; staff training worksheet is on page 68.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify how thinking, "No one was hurt,"
can be an error that leads to inappropriate and
irresponsible behavior.

GUIDELINES:

Suggested Discussion:

- What statements suggested that some people in the video were not aware of how much harm they had done?
- What is the result of thinking this way?
- What statements suggested that, at times, the person really didn't care whether he or she harmed anyone?

1/2 hour to 1 hour session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify, through a written exercise,
how the harm done to others is ignored or rationalized.

GUIDELINES:

- Begin with the discussion above, then instruct participants to complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

If time allows, discuss their observations of the exercise. Again, keep the focus on the relationship between behavior and thinking.

CONTINUED, NEXT PG

Leading SESSION SEVEN CONTINUED

Extended Learning Students or Staff

-

Complete the options above and -- if practical for your situation -- have students read (or read passages to them) from the books:

"The Criminal Personality," Vol. 1 pages 374 - 375, Vol. 2 page 221 - 228

"Inside The Criminal Mind," Chapter 7, pages 95 - 117

"Before It's Too Late," pages 50 - 61

After reading these pages, have participants write:

A. **Objectively:** A half page or more (about 75 to 100 words) describing what Yochelson and Samenow stated about the "criminal mind" and how that relates to criminal behavior. Remind participants to be objective and describe what the authors stated, rather than the student's personal opinion.

B. **Subjectively:** A half page or more (approximately 75 to 150 words) stating the participant's personal beliefs about the material they read. Do they agree or disagree?

At the conclusion of these assignments, encourage participants to discuss their observations and feelings about this material (can be used as a homework assignment).

READING for SESSION SEVEN

Error in Thinking: "NO ONE WAS HURT."

Failure to Consider Injury to Others

How often have you wanted to do something and then, with little thought about the consequences, immediately acted on it?

Did you decide to break into a home, steal a car, hold up a store, snatch a pocketbook? Or did you lie, con, insult and threaten? Your mind was only on what you wanted at the time.

Maybe you saw a night clerk alone -- and felt certain that, at the sight of your gun, he or she would empty the cash register. Perhaps you've seen a woman standing alone at a bus stop, purse swinging loosely in her hand. The opportunity was there, and you acted.

At these times, you were so intent on what you wanted that you never thought about how upset and fearful the clerk would feel, or how the woman whose purse you stole might be afraid ever to go out again by herself.

Every time someone commits a crime, there are many victims. Yet criminals consider only what they want at the time.

Imagine that your wife or husband, sister or mother has been harmed by a criminal. How would you feel? How would your family feel?

Have you ever told others that you don't hurt people -- you only take things? The truth is that the employee who was on duty may be so terrified that he or she cannot return to the job. The victim's children may be shaken and fearful. His or her family may be frightened. Neighbors may be plagued by fear.

The criminal who is arrested is also hurt. So are his or her children, family and loved ones. Everyone pays a price.

The criminal thinks only of himself -- and usually in the short term.

Each of us has a choice. We can be one of society's takers; we can spend a lifetime harming others, including those who care about us. Or we can choose to think about the consequences of our actions; we can commit ourselves to living responsibly. If we choose, we can become people who help instead of hurt. Instead of taking, we can contribute. The choice is ours.

ROLE-PLAYS SESSIONS SEVEN & EIGHT

Error in Thinking: *“No one was hurt.”*

In this session Dr. Samenow used a participant’s interview to illustrate a thinking error we often fall into. One way to avoid thinking errors is to practice thinking and reacting differently to situations and people in our lives.

Like any skill, to be good at thinking clearly and reacting to situations and people in a healthy way, we must practice. The following role-play allows you to practice healthy responses to situations that in the past may have triggered your thinking errors.

Think of a situation in which you believed that your choices were not hurting anyone. Write about that below.

Now think of a healthier way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind that often the harm we inflict on others is not a direct result of our actions but an unintended consequence of our poor choices. Write about that below.

Now think of a person you might be discussing this situation with and write a script you can use to practice role-playing these new healthy ways of thinking, reacting, and responding to the old situation. A prompt by the “other person” has been provided to get you started.

Other person: What was the impact on others of your choices?

You:

Other Person: How did it affect those who love you?

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

You:

Other Person: How did it hurt you?

You:

Other Person: How will better choices in the future affect you?

You:

Other Person: How will better choices in the future affect those who love you?

You:

Now practice the script with a partner and be prepared to share the role-play with the entire group.

WORKSHEET for SESSION SEVEN

Student

Error in Thinking: “NO ONE WAS HURT.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

One person in the Video said, "If we sat here and said, 'Yeah, I did those things, I'm a creep'..." He seemed to be saying that it was too painful to admit the truth.

Believing that "no one was really hurt" allows people to continue harming others. The following questions are designed to help you explore this attitude:

What are some of the ways people justify believing that "no one was really hurt?"

In the DVD, what were some of the statements that demonstrated this belief?

If there was no physical injury, does that mean there is little or no emotional injury? Please explain.

Think of some examples of emotional injury. How long would that injury probably last? Please explain.

Certified Facilitator – Samenow’s Overcoming Errors in Thinking

STAFF TRAINING WORKSHEET for SESSION SEVEN

Error in Thinking: “NO ONE WAS HURT.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

In order for an individual to face this error in his or her thinking, it is important for the person to be prepared for the embarrassment, fear and vulnerability he or she will feel. This process might have to begin with objective confrontation, as if holding up a mirror (providing an accurate reflection of the person's thinking and behavior). The following questions are designed to help you explore ways to accomplish this effectively.

What are some effective ways to confront someone who says,...

..."I didn't really hurt anyone; I just broke into houses when nobody was home."

..."I only shoplift. No one is really hurt. I sell the stuff at half price to people who need it."

..."If I have to use a gun, I don't put a bullet in the chamber. That way I know no one will get hurt."

Certified Facilitator – Samenow’s Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Leading SESSION EIGHT

Who is Hurt?

Show and discuss the Session 8 portion of Video Part II.

STAFF TRAINING: Same guidelines. It is suggested that staff members become familiar with the student worksheet; it is a useful tool.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify the many victims who are harmed when a crime is committed.

GUIDELINES:

Suggested Discussion:

- In the video, men and women serving time talked about who was hurt by their actions. Who did they say was hurt? Describe all you can recall.
- What kind of harm did they say was done to others?
- If a person is hurt or scarred emotionally, is that a "serious" injury? Explain.

1/2 Hour to 1 Hour Time Frame

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify the ripple effect of an irresponsible or criminal act.

GUIDELINES:

After completing the discussion above, instruct participants to complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

If time allows, discuss their observations of the exercise. As always, keep the focus on the relationship between thinking, behavior and consequences.

Another option: have participants read the written material aloud; then discuss.

CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE...

Leading SESSION EIGHT CONTINUED

Extended Learning Students or Staff

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Describe objectively Yochelson's and Samenow's beliefs about how this error influences behavior.

Describe personal beliefs about this issue.

GUIDELINES:

Complete the options above and -- if practical for your situation -- have participants read (or read passages to them) from the books:

"The Criminal Personality," Vol. 1 pages 374 - 375, Vol. 2 pages 221 - 228

"Inside The Criminal Mind," Chapter 7, pages 95 - 117

"Before It's Too Late," pages 50 - 61

After reading these pages, have participants write:

A. **Objectively:** A half page or more (about 75 to 100 words) describing what Yochelson and Samenow stated about the "criminal mind" and how that relates to criminal behavior. Remind participants to be objective and describe what the authors stated, rather than the student's personal opinion.

B. **Subjectively:** A half page or more (approximately 75 to 150 words) stating the participant's personal beliefs about the material they read. Do they agree or disagree?

At the conclusion of these assignments, encourage participants to discuss their observations and feelings about this material (can be used as a homework assignment).

READING for SESSION EIGHT

Who is Hurt?

One important step toward change is to become aware of -- to fully take in -- the injury done to self and others by destructive actions.

People in the video talked about who was hurt by their actions. The victims were scarred emotionally, if not physically. The victim's family -- and neighbors -- may have been left with a lifelong feeling of terror. The convicted person's loved ones -- children, wife or husband, lover, mother and father, brothers and sisters and friends -- all pay a painful price. And so does the person who committed the act.

This circle of injury -- the result of a single irresponsible act -- can be called a "ripple effect." The wave of hurt moves out endlessly, like the ripples on a pond when a stone is thrown in.

Family members of those who commit destructive acts are typically confused by these actions. It's not unusual for children to ask why Dad, Mom, Uncle ... would do something so bad.

Victims live with the confusion and anger they feel because someone was willing to harm them for selfish gratification. Family and friends of victims have to take time off from work to attend numerous court hearings, where they re-live the painful experience again and again.

Society watches, day after day, as the news shows them violence, injury and death resulting from criminal acts. Large businesses, insurance companies and small shop owners all have to increase their prices to compensate for costs forced on them by crime. Taxpayers, especially people with limited income -- single moms trying to feed and clothe their children -- are affected the most by these increases.

When an habitual criminal finally decides to stop harming others and become a responsible individual, that also creates a ripple effect. Potential victims will not be harmed; neither will family and friends. This newly-responsible person contributes to the family; the children have reason to be proud; they have a parent that provides a model for their own lives.

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Those who choose to show kindness instead of cruelty, encourage kindness in others.
Which kind of ripples will you choose to spread?

WORKSHEET for SESSION EIGHT Student

Who is Hurt?

Those of us who want to change must face the consequences of our behavior. It is a necessary step for change. Yet taking that step can be embarrassing, uncomfortable and even terrifying at times.

If you are ready to face this issue, simply fill in the blanks or make a check mark by the ones that apply to you.

SUMMARY OF THE VIDEO:

Part III - Overcoming Errors in Thinking

MINUTES
from start

- 0 INTRODUCTION - It is difficult, but possible, to change your thinking -- and your life.
- 3 MAIN TITLE *Part III Overcoming Errors in Thinking*
- 4 Review of errors revealed in Parts I and II. Focus will now turn to the process of change.
- 5 **SESSION 9** *Focus on Your Thoughts -- Find the Error*
(TITLE ON SCREEN)

One final error serves to illustrate how the process of change can begin: focus on your thoughts. The interview and exploration of the error: "It's okay to shut off fear."

A corrective: listen to the fear -- "Fear reminds me of painful consequences.

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION

SESSION 10 *Catch Your Thoughts Before You Act*
(TITLE ON SCREEN)

A roleplay and related experiences ground this concept in practical examples. How to begin the process of overcoming errors.

Catch the Error -- Remember Where it Leads (TITLE ON SCREEN)

Staying aware of consequences is an essential part of overcoming errors. It provides good reason to stop and change course.

Look in the Mirror (TITLE ON SCREEN)

What reason is there to change -- unless we take a long, hard look at ourselves and become "fed up?"

Fear of Change (TITLE ON SCREEN)

Fear of change is real; it can prevent us from changing -- unless we face it squarely.

.SUMMARY OF THE VIDEO: *Part III* CONTINUED

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION

An opportunity to discuss fear of change, through the painfully honest and insightful statements just experienced.

SESSION 11 *Other Options*
(TITLE ON SCREEN)

A rich variety of positive options -- ways to build a responsible life.
Dr. Samenow summarizes the practical how-to of overcoming errors.
The bottom line: change is difficult -- but possible.

Practical steps for change (an easy way to remember: the first letter of each line spells FREE.)

Leading SESSION NINE

Error in Thinking: “IT’S OKAY TO SHUT OFF FEAR.”

Show and discuss the Session 9 portion of Video Part III.

STAFF TRAINING: Same guidelines; a special staff training worksheet is provided (page 82).

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Identify why thinking, “It’s okay to shut off fear,” can be an error.

Describe how that error can lead to inappropriate and irresponsible behavior.

GUIDELINES:

Suggested Discussion:

- In the Video, people described different ways they shut off fear.
What are some of those ways?
- Where does this thinking error lead?
- What is the value of "listening to your fears?"

1/2 Hour to 1 Hour Session

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Identify, through a written exercise, how easy it is to commit this error through the use of drugs, apathy and rationalization.

GUIDELINES:

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Following the discussion above, instruct participants to complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

If time allows, discuss their observations of the exercise.

Leading SESSION NINE CONTINUED

Extended Learning Students or Staff

After completing the options above -- and if practical for your situation -- have students read (or read passages to them) from these books:

"The Criminal Personality." Vol. 1 pages 386-387 and 411-416

"The Criminal Personality." Vol. 2 pages 238-243

-

After reading these pages, have participants write:

A. **Objectively:** A half page or more (about 75 to 100 words) describing what Yochelson and Samenow stated about the "criminal mind" and how that relates to criminal behavior. Remind participants to be objective and describe what the authors stated, rather than the student's personal opinion.

B. **Subjectively:** A half page or more (approximately 75 to 150 words) stating the participant's personal beliefs about the material they read. Do they agree or disagree?

At the conclusion of these assignments, encourage participants to discuss their observations and feelings about this material (can be used as a homework assignment).

READING for SESSION NINE

Error in Thinking: "It's Okay to Shut Off Fear."

We all know that when we do something that is harmful or illegal, there will be consequences. A person who breaks the law knows that he can be arrested and locked up. In a risky or dangerous crime, he is well aware that he can be injured or killed. Yet it is striking to see how often some people ignore these thoughts.

A person planning destructive behavior may shut off fear of what could happen -- like turning off a light switch.

These same people may warn their own children about the risk of destructive behavior, yet ignore their own advice in their own lives. A father teaches his children how wrong it is to steal. Yet, when he runs out of money to buy drugs, he steals everything in his son's piggy bank. He did not intend on hurting his son. But he is so determined to buy the drugs, he simply shuts off any thought of right or wrong -- or of the consequences to his family and himself.

Maybe it would be too painful for such people to stop and think; they might have to face the fact that they're hurting others. The problem is that people who act destructively don't stop to think. The excitement of the moment or the intensity of their desire gains the upper hand.

People whose conscience would prevent them from harming an elderly or sick person might break into an elderly person's home; they choose to not think about the consequences.

Only later will they be faced with possible regret about what happened to them as a result of their actions or what they have done to others. That "later" is always too late!

Most of us feel some fear when we think about actually doing a dangerous or destructive act. The thought of what could happen brings that fear. We may shut it off -- drink or use drugs -- or choose to think of other things. But we do feel it. That feeling of fear is like an alarm, warning us that something is wrong. If we take the time to notice the fear -- to think about what could happen -- we are less likely to do something destructive.

Some people think it takes courage to do dangerous and destructive things. The truth is, people who do those things often don't have enough courage to face their own feelings.

Facing your feelings takes a great deal of courage. And learning to listen to your own conscience -- your own fears of what could happen -- is an essential step toward change.

ROLE-PLAYS SESSION NINE

Errors in Thinking: “It’s okay to shut off fear.”

In this session Dr. Samenow used a participant’s interview to illustrate a thinking error we often fall into. One way to avoid thinking errors is to practice thinking and reacting differently to situations and people in our lives.

Like any skill, to be good at thinking clearly and reacting to situations and people in a healthy way, we must practice. The following role-play allows you to practice healthy responses to situations that in the past may have triggered your thinking errors.

Think of a situation in which you made a choice which helped you to shut off your fear. Write about that below.

Now think of a healthier way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind that often the feeling of fear is present to remind us to avoid painful consequences of our actions. Write about that below.

Now think of a person you might be discussing this situation with and write a script you can use to practice role-playing these new constructive ways of thinking, reacting, and responding to the old situation. A prompt by the “other person” has been provided to get you started.

Other person: How did the feeling of fear communicate a warning to you?

You:

Other Person: What might have happened if you had listened to your fear?

You:

Other Person: How does the feeling of fear help you?

You:

Other Person: How will you react when someone calls you a “chicken” or makes fun of you for being fearful?

You:

Other Person: How does accepting your fear and listening to your fear actually make you courageous?

You:

Now practice the script with a partner and be prepared to share the role-play with the entire group.

WORKSHEET for SESSION NINE

Student

"It's Okay to Shut Off Fear."

(If necessary, use an additional page)

When you become aware of this error in thinking, you take a valuable step toward change; you are addressing one of the deep roots of criminal thinking: the belief that "I should avoid my fears." Some examples of such fears: the fear of consequences; the fear of rejection by loved ones; the fear of failure; the fear of losing freedom and privileges -- and most importantly -- the fear of being vulnerable.

For those who desire to change, the following exercises are designed to assist you in exploring these issues:

Please describe the specific fears that you have tried to avoid -- fears that could have prevented you from harming others.

What will be the possible consequences in your life and in the lives of others if you choose tosteal?

...destroy property?

...sell drugs?

...rob someone?

Certified Facilitator – Samenow’s Overcoming Errors in Thinking

...break into a home or business?

CONTINUED...

WORKSHEET for SESSION NINE CONTINUED

In the past, when you did something that resulted in harm to others, describe what you were thinking about prior to committing that harmful act.

What happened to your knowledge of right and wrong in the thinking you described above?

What reasons did you use to allow you to shut off your fears and conscience?

Were the reasons described above reinforced because you succeeded at getting what you wanted? _____ Had these beliefs or reasons succeeded in other situations? Please explain.

Do you have a conscience? _____ If you answer yes, how do you know this?

What sort of things does your conscience tell you not to do?

Have you ever stopped listening and gone against your conscience? When? What happened? Please explain.

What fears could be beneficial to you, if you decide to change for the better?

STAFF TRAINING WORKSHEET SESSION NINE

Error in Thinking: "It's Okay to Shut Off Fear."

Recognizing this error in thinking can be the beginning in addressing one of the deep roots of criminal thinking: the belief that "I should avoid my fears." Some examples of such fears: the fear of consequences; the fear of rejection by loved ones; the fear of failure; the fear of losing freedom and privileges -- and most importantly -- the fear of being vulnerable.

The following exercise is designed to stimulate thought about ways to explore this issue with people who want to change.

An individual tells you that he really doesn't think about the consequences before he commits a crime. What steps would you take to explore this?

Clients tell you that when they break into a home, they are thinking only about obtaining the things of value, then getting out. Including the steps you described above, how could you help such people to explore their fears -- and their ability to shut off those fears?

What could you say to such people about the numerous possible consequences they face when they break into a home?

List all of the possible ways that such people might rationalize -- in order to believe that what they are doing is "right" for them.

How would you confront these rationalizations?

Leading SESSION TEN

Catch the Error -- Remember Where it Leads

The central concept: it is possible to catch errors in thinking -- to consider the consequences -- before taking action.

Show and discuss the Session 10 portion of Video Part III.

STAFF TRAINING: Same guidelines; a special staff training worksheet is provided (page 89).

15 to 30 minute time frame

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Describe why catching thinking errors
before acting on them is essential for change.

GUIDELINES:

Suggested Discussion:

- In the roleplay part of the Video, one person said, "You're in my chair!" What error in thinking does that demonstrate?
- What are the possible consequences of his thinking?
- What would you say he was thinking before he walked up to the seated inmate?
- What was it he needed to "catch" in his thinking?

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

- After "catching" his initial thought, how could he have changed his thinking?
What could he have said to himself instead?

CONTINUED.....

Leading SESSION TEN CONTINUED

1/2 Hour to 1 Hour Time Frame

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Write and utilize a "thinking diary,"
to begin the process of change.

GUIDELINES:

After completing the discussion above, instruct participants to complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

If time allows, discuss their observations of the exercise.

Extended Learning Students or Staff

After completing the options above -- and if practical for your situation - - have students read (or read to them) from the book...

"The Criminal Personality", Vol. 2 pages 161-177

After reading these pages, have participants write:

A. **Objectively:** A half page or more (about 75 to 100 words) describing what Yochelson and Samenow stated about the "criminal mind" and how that relates to criminal behavior. Remind participants to be objective and describe what the authors stated, rather than the student's personal opinion.

B. **Subjectively:** A half page or more (approximately 75 to 150 words) stating the participant's personal beliefs about the material they read. Do they agree or disagree?

At the conclusion of these assignments, encourage participants to discuss their observations and feelings about this material (can be used as a homework assignment).

READING for SESSION TEN

Catch the Error

One of the earliest warning signs of inappropriate behaviors is inappropriate thoughts. Catching these thoughts, each and every time they occur, is a small but crucial step toward change.

It is essential to analyze your own thoughts each day. If you took an irresponsible action, what were your thoughts before it happened?

When a friend asks you to do something, take a few minutes and ask yourself, "Is that something I really want to do? Will it result in trouble?"

Practice doing this, step by step, one situation at a time. If you find yourself thinking of saying something inappropriate, stop . . . think it over . . . and explore other ways of expressing yourself that are responsible and appropriate.

Why would you want to catch yourself before you act? Because you know where it's going to lead. Sometimes walking away from a conflict is a greater sign of strength than escalating the situation into a crisis. Learning to live without creating trouble takes practice and effort. It also takes a willingness to consider others' rights, in addition to your own.

The good news is, you can change. Catching these errors in thinking requires a hard look into a mirror that honestly reflects things about yourself that need to change. No one likes to look too long at their weaknesses, flaws and errors -- but in the beginning, that's essential. Unless you're willing to take a good hard look at what needs changing, you're not going to engage in the difficult work of change. Until you become disgusted with these aspects of your life, you're not likely to be motivated.

As you begin to catch your errors, you can think through the problem, realizing the possible outcomes for responsible and irresponsible actions. Every time you correct an error

in thinking it becomes another step forward -- a step that can lead to positive habits -- and a life that is free of the pain caused by errors in thinking.

ROLE-PLAYS SESSIONS TEN & ELEVEN

Correcting Our Thinking: “Catch Your Thoughts Before You Act.”

In this session participants engaged in a chow hall role play to illustrate a thinking error we often fall into. One way to avoid falling into thinking errors is to practice thinking and reacting differently to situations and people in our lives.

Like any skill, to be good at thinking clearly and reacting to situations and people in a healthy way, we must practice. The following role-play allows you to practice constructive responses to situations that in the past may have triggered your thinking errors.

Think of a situation in which you believed that you had to “save face” or act in a certain manner because of the expectations of those around you. Write about that below.

Now think of a more constructive way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind that if we can contemplate the consequences of our actions or where our actions might lead before we act, we may choose differently. Write about that below.

Certified Facilitator – Samenow’s Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Now think of a person you might be discussing this situation with and write a script you can use to practice role-playing these new constructive ways of thinking, reacting, and responding to the old situation. A prompt by the “other person” has been provided to get you started.

Other person: Why you’d let that guy punk you?

You:

Other Person: How important is the opinion of others to you?

You:

Other Person: If you avoid problems by being the bigger person, how will the future be different?

You:

Other Person:

You:

Other Person:

You:

Now practice the script with a partner and be prepared to share the role-play with the entire group.

WORKSHEET for SESSION TEN

Student and Staff

(See Staff Worksheet)

Catch the Error

(If necessary, use an additional page)

To change the thinking patterns of a lifetime takes work! Just as we have to train if we want to become physically fit, so we must practice constantly to develop responsible thinking. It is not possible to magically erase old patterns and replace them with new ones. It takes daily practice. One way to practice is to keep a diary of your thoughts. It is not difficult to do. Like any kind of exercise, it must be done regularly in order to become a part of your life.

The mind is always busy. We are always thinking. Even when we are sick and in bed -- our minds continue to work. There is never a lack of thoughts to write about.

The following steps will guide you in making a "thinking diary." Please check off each one as you apply it:

- ___ 1. Acquire a notebook so that the daily entries will all be in one place.
- ___ 2. Pick a time each day to write an entry into the notebook (just as you would schedule a time to exercise).
- ___ 3. Think of an incident or mood that has occurred in the past 24 hours. (See step 9.)
- ___ 4. Recall what was going on at the time.
- ___ 5. Remember how you reacted. Record your actions and reactions during this incident or mood.
- ___ 6. Write about what you were thinking during the incident or mood. Were there actions you thought about doing but decided not to?
- ___ 7. Write down what you believe to have been some "errors" in your thinking. Describe any irresponsible actions that followed.
- ___ 8. Write down what you believe to have been responsible thoughts -- or changes that you made in your thinking. Describe any responsible actions which followed.
- ___ 9. If no particular incident occurred which you believe is worth writing about, think about the moods you were in or the feelings you were having and follow steps 3 through 8.
- ___ 10. Find someone whom you can trust -- someone who will understand and encourage you to change for the better. Talk about these incidents or moods with that person.

STAFF TRAINING WORKSHEET SESSION 10

Catch the Error

Instructions for a Thinking Diary

Refer to the Session Ten student worksheet; it gives directions for creating and using a "thinking diary." It is useful to understand this process, as a tool for assisting people who have the desire to change. It is suggested that you experience this process yourself; have in mind specific changes and self-improvements you'd like to create in your own life. Try the process for a period of two to four weeks.

The following exercises are designed to assist you in helping clients to create and use thinking diaries:

Situation: You are helping someone with his or her thinking diary. That person reports to you some of the following issues (note -- many have found that it's best to have the person report to you from the diary, rather than for you to read or analyze it or "play detective"):

The individual reports..."I really didn't have anything significant happen in the past 24 hours."
Your response would be:

The individual reports..."Well, I did write about feeling kind of angry most of yesterday morning." Your response would be:

Certified Facilitator – Samenow’s Overcoming Errors in Thinking

After discussing the items above, what are some possibilities you could explore next?

Leading SESSION ELEVEN

Fear of Change ... and...Responsible Options

Show and discuss the portion of Video Part III from *Fear of Change* through *Responsible Options* (see Summary of the Video, page 70).

STAFF TRAINING: Same guidelines; a staff training worksheet is provided (page 96).

15 to 30 minute time frame

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

-

Identify fears which can prevent people from making a commitment to change.

Identify responsible ways to overcome those fears.

Describe practical steps which can lead to change.

GUIDELINES:

In this final session, participants are given the opportunity to identify fears which can prevent people from making necessary changes. Next, responsible options are explored -- and a practical formula for change is presented.

- People in the video talked about fears which might stand in the way of change. What fears did they mention?
- They discussed positive options -- things they could do that would help them change. What things did they describe?
- Dr. Samenow said that some people expect to have what they want in a hurry. That could lead them to become discouraged. Can you give examples of what he was describing? Can you think of other "unrealistic expectations" that people might have?
- What are some of the benefits that someone might experience if they decide to "stick with it" and continue to make improvements in their life?
- What are the "Practical Steps for Change?" How are they practical?

Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Provide examples of how these steps might be applied

Leading SESSION ELEVEN CONTINUED

1/2 Hour to 1 Hour Time Frame

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Identify in writing: personal fears about change;
responsible ways to overcome those fears;
benefits of change.

GUIDELINES:

Following the discussion above, instruct participants to complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session (next two pages).

If time allows, discuss their observations of the exercise.

If you have questions or comments, please feel free to write the authors (see last page of this guide).

Extended Learning Students or Staff

After completing the options above, and if practical for your situation, have participants read (or read passages to them) from the books:

"The Criminal Personality," Vol. 2 pages 3-18

"Inside the Criminal Mind," Chapter 13, pages 211-243

After reading these pages, have participants write:

A. **Objectively:** a half-page or more (about 75 to 100 words) describing what Yochelson and Samenow stated about the “criminal mind” and how that relates to criminal behavior. Remind participants to be objective and describe what the authors stated, rather than stating a personal opinion.

B. **Subjectively:** A half page or more (approximately 75 to 150 words) stating the participants’ personal beliefs about the material they read. Do they agree or disagree?

At the conclusion of these assignments, encourage participants to discuss their observations and feelings about this material (can be used as a homework assignment).

READING for SESSION ELEVEN

How Change can Begin: Overcoming Fears
Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Overcoming Fears

What does it take to change lifelong patterns -- to grow as a person and create a better life? When we work to change any habit, we run into similar issues:

- Confronting fears
- Making the necessary commitments
- Putting forth the required effort
- Enduring difficulties and situations that feel painfully unfair

Why would anyone choose to face these difficult barriers? What are the benefits to be gained?

For many, personal improvement is the doorway to a far better life. But the journey is not an easy one; it requires the courage to face our fears -- and there is no guarantee of success. The only thing certain is that if we do not make this journey, our lives are likely to remain exactly as they are.

When people choose to change, it is often because they have become "fed up" -- their lives are too hard to bear. For them, it has become a choice between life and death.

But fear of change is real. It can be a barrier which prevents us from making the commitment to a better lifestyle. How can we overcome these fears? We can begin by stopping what we usually do; that is, we can stop avoiding our fears.

It's hard to overcome something unless you know what it is. A good first step is to make a list of what you fear. (The worksheet for this session will help you do that.) Many have found it helpful to list their fears and ask themselves, "If I begin to change, what's the worst possible thing that could happen to me?" And, "If I don't change, what's the worst thing that could happen?" Often, the second option is far worse than the first.

Overcoming Errors in Thinking

The Videos revealed several key errors in thinking and showed where those errors lead: they create lives filled with pain.

The Videos also showed the steps required to overcome those errors -- to create a life that is not based on errors. Change can begin with the next situation you meet today -- and how you choose to handle it. These are practical ways to overcome errors in thinking:

CONTINUED....

READING for SESSION ELEVEN CONTINUED

Practical Steps that Lead to Change

Focus on your thoughts; find each error
Remember where it leads
Eliminate the error before you act
Explore options for responsible action

*Responsible thinking keeps us **FREE**
-- from choices that lead to painful consequences.*

Some suggestions for each step:

Focus on your thoughts; find each error

Do this every day, moment by moment. Your thinking diary can assist you in noting changes that occur.

Remember where it leads

Ask yourself, "If I take this action, what is the likely result?" Painful consequences last far longer than the temporary benefit of irresponsible action.

Eliminate the error before you act

This is the commitment you make to yourself -- to abstain from all irresponsible, self-centered behaviors, regardless of the situation.

Be accountable to someone you trust, who understands the nature of your problem and is capable of helping you become increasingly responsible.

Explore responsible options

This will become a major part of your new life -- a life based on self-honesty that agrees with and supports your commitment to change.

WORKSHEET for SESSION ELEVEN

A Message from Dr. Stanton Samenow

Congratulations on your persistence; you are completing this program, which means you are now familiar with five basic errors in thinking.

You have given serious thought to your own personal situation -- and hopefully have concluded that right now, personal change is the most important thing in your life.

If you desire to change your life, from this point on you will constantly need to be willing to put forth the needed effort; you will need to make this commitment central to your activities every day.

You know that change does not occur simply by watching a DVD and completing workbook exercises. If you want to correct your thinking, it's up to you to follow through and practice what you are learning.

You have been offered guidelines to help you become aware of your thinking, to spot the errors and practice correcting those errors. Now the choice is yours, whether you will make this a part of your life each day.

The rewards may not be immediate, but they will come; in time, the benefits will grow more and more evident and will last longer. As in lifting weights, it takes time and sticking with it -- but the benefits are real.

The following exercise is designed to help you apply the process of lasting change to your own life. If you make the commitment, I wish you the very best!

An Inventory of Fears

Please put a check mark next to the ones you feel at times.

When I think about changing my life, at times I have a fear of...

- ☐ temptations
- ☐ change being too difficult
- ☐ having good intentions, but not the ability to succeed
- ☐ not knowing if change is really possible for me
- ☐ rejection from my current friends if I change
- ☐ rejection from my family if I change
- ☐ having to be responsible
- ☐ making commitments I might not be able to keep
- ☐ becoming someone I wouldn't like
- ☐ being too straight
- ☐ being weak
- ☐ losing my "street smarts"
- ☐ not being able to relate to responsible people

Certified Facilitator – Samenow’s Overcoming Errors in Thinking

___ being overwhelmed by it all
___ not being able to have as much fun if I change

CONTINUED...

WORKSHEET for SESSION ELEVEN CONTINUED

Add some fears of your own, if you wish:

Positive Options

Please put a check mark next to the ones which apply to you:

- ☐ I can make up my mind to stay away from situations and people that are a bad influence.
- ☐ I can make a plan on ways to avoid these bad situations and people each day.
- ☐ If I keep trying, I can find some people who would encourage me to become a better person.
- ☐ I can at least start by agreeing to do those things I have to do -- stay out of trouble until that becomes a new habit that I feel comfortable with.
- ☐ I am willing today to do some things I don't feel like doing -- things I know I should be doing.
- ☐ I am willing to make an ongoing commitment to myself to abstain from any and all irresponsible behaviors, regardless of the situation.
- ☐ Regardless of how many times I fail at keeping this commitment, I will keep trying until I get it right.
- ☐ I will constantly remind myself that change is possible as long as I don't give up on myself.

List other options if you wish:

Benefits of Change

Some of the possible benefits of change are listed. Please put a check mark next to the ones that apply to you.

- ☐ Beginning to feel better about myself and the accomplishments I am achieving
- ☐ My family is becoming proud of me
- ☐ My good friends or new friends are proud of me
- ☐ I am able to influence others for the better -- to help heal rather than harm
- ☐ Getting away from what I was; becoming someone I can be proud of
- ☐ Thinking of others instead of only thinking about myself
- ☐ Using the opportunities I have today for self-improvement
- ☐ Learning to live life on life's terms; becoming more comfortable with things I can't control
- ☐ I'm able to put forth the effort
- ☐ I'm feeling hope for the future

Add other benefits if you wish:

WORKSHEET FOR STAFF TRAINING

SESSION ELEVEN

Fear of Change / Other Options

A Message from Ricklin E. Bussard, Consultant and Co-Author

As professionals, line staff, volunteers or concerned family members and friends, we have faced many of the issues addressed in this program. When someone we're trying to assist chooses not to change, it's all too easy to feel personally responsible. We are, after all, caring human beings.

We know, of course, that if a person refuses to change -- or appears to do so -- it is his or her choice -- and not ours. Sometimes the most compassionate thing we can do is to allow people to experience the consequences of their own actions. Surely we would not like to see people suffer painful consequences; yet, at times, they must have the opportunity to experience the results of their actions.

In order to lead a responsible life, each one of us must have this realization: "I am responsible for the consequences of my behavior." Those we work with and assist need to come to the same realization.

The following exercises are designed to help you explore some beliefs and feelings that many of us share in common:

Some of my personal concerns and feelings about letting someone experience the painful consequences of irresponsible behavior are...

(Please put a check mark next to the ones that apply to you)

- ☐ I might be seen as not caring or not being concerned for that person.
 - ☐ Others might think that I am being too hard or callous.
 - ☐ That person might get worse if I don't rescue them from those severe consequences.
 - ☐ I will feel bad or responsible if that person suffers.
 - ☐ I might allow this to happen for the wrong reason (personal grudge).
 - ☐ I might be accused of doing my job improperly.
 - ☐ That person might become violent or extremely angry with me.
- List other concerns if you wish:

CONTINUED...

WORKSHEET FOR STAFF TRAINING SESSION ELEVEN CONTINUED

Please describe your beliefs concerning change and personal responsibility prior to participating in this DVD-based program.

Please describe any changes in your beliefs as a result of participating in this program.

Please describe how you might be able to use the information and approaches learned in this program in your professional or personal life.

REFERENCES

- Blonigen, D. M., Macia, K. S., Cucciare, M. A., & Smelson, D. (2024). For whom are treatments for criminal recidivism effective? Moderator effects from a randomized controlled trial of justice-involved veterans. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 92(2), 118-128. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000864>
- Scollione, J. (2024). A systems-based approach to criminal thinking and behavior. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 68(15), 1615-1628. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X241270565>
- Sease, T. B., Joe, G., Pankow, J., Lehman, W. E. K., & Knight, K. (2022). A psychometric reevaluation of the TCU criminal thinking scales (CTS). *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 61(3), 135-147. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2022.2045528>
- Shomali Ahmadabadi, M., Rezapour-Mirsaleh, Y., & Yousefi, Z. (2024). Effectiveness of Ellis's rational-emotional approach on criminal thinking and law-evasion in male prisoners. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X241282280>
- Smith, A., Roberts, A., Krzemieniewska-Nandwani, K., Eggins, L., Cook, W., Fox, C., Maruna, S., Wallace, S., & Szifris, K. (2024). Revisiting the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioural therapy for reducing reoffending in the criminal justice system: A systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 20(3), e1425. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1425>
- Syasyila, K., Gin, L. L., Abdullah Mohd Nor, H., & Kamaluddin, M. R. (2024). The role of cognitive distortion in criminal behavior: A systematic literature review. *BMC Psychology*, 12(1), 741. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-02228-0>
- Timko, C., Vest, N., Cucciare, M. A., Smelson, D., & Blonigen, D. (2022). Substance use and criminogenic thinking: Longitudinal latent class analysis of veterans with criminal histories. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 143, 108893. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsat.2022.108893>
- Walters, G. D. (2022). Changes in criminal thinking from midadolescence to early adulthood: Does trajectory direction matter? *Law and Human Behavior*, 46(2), 154-163. <https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000468>

BOOKS for Extended Learning

The following books by Dr. Samenow are suggested in the guidelines for "Extended Learning" in each session:

- Samenow, Stanton E. ***The Myth of the Out of Character Crime***. Praeger (Hardcover 2007, Paperback 2010)
- Samenow, Stanton E. ***Straight Talk About Criminals*** Jason Aronson, Inc. (Hardcover 1997, Paperback 2002)
- Samenow, Stanton E. ***Inside the Criminal Mind***. Broadway (Paperback), 2014
- Samenow, Stanton E. ***Before It's Too Late***. Three Rivers (Paperback), 2001
- Samenow, Stanton E. and Yochelson, Samuel. ***The Criminal Personality***. Jason Aronson, Inc.
- Vol. 1: ***Profile for Change***. (Hardcover 1976) Now paperback only, 2000.
- Vol. 2: ***The Change Process***. (Hardcover, 1977) Now paperback, 1995.
- Vol. 3: ***The Drug User***. (Hardcover 1977) Now paperback only, 2000.

The books above are copyrighted; federal law prohibits copying. Do not copy pages from these books.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION about Errors in Thinking...

The E.D.I.T. Network (Errors Defined In Thinking) is composed of professionals and others who work with the concept of thinking errors. From time to time, a newsletter is published to share information, ideas and experiences. Comments or questions about the concepts in this Video program will also be answered.

E.D.I.T. Network
Attention: Ricklin E. Bussard
P.O. Box 2131
Canon City
CO 81215-2131

TO RE-ORDER any part of this Program...

Call or write...

CEU Matrix 1-800-421-4609
PO Box 2268
Georgetown, TX 78627
www.ceumatrix.com

Appendix A: Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Overcoming Errors in Thinking

Directions: To receive credits for this course, you are required to take a post test and receive a passing score. We have set a minimum standard of 80% as the passing score to assure the highest standard of knowledge retention and understanding. The test is comprised of multiple choice and/or true/false questions that will investigate your knowledge and understanding of the materials found in this CEU Matrix – The Institute for Addiction and Criminal Justice distance learning course.

After you complete your reading and review of this material, you will need to answer each of the test questions. Then, submit your test to us for processing. This can be done in the following manner:

Submit your test via the Internet. All of our tests are posted electronically, allowing immediate test results and quicker processing. First, you may want to answer your post test questions found at the end of this appendix. Then, return to your browser and go to the Student Center located at:

<http://www.ceumatrix.com/studentcenter>

Once there, log in as a Returning Customer using your Email Address and Password. Then click on 'View Lesson Quiz' and you will be presented with the electronic exam.

To take the exam, simply select from the choices of "a" through "e" for each multiple choice question. For true/false questions, select either "a" for true, or "b" for false. Once you are done, simply click on the submit button at the bottom of the page. Your exam will be graded and you will receive your results immediately. If your score is 80% or greater, you will receive a link to the course evaluation. You will also receive a link to the Certificate of Completion. This is the final step in the process, and you may save and / or print your Certificate of Completion.

If, however, you do not achieve a passing score of at least 80%, you will need to review the course material and return to the Student Center to resubmit your answers.

NOTE: THE EXAM QUESTIONS AND /OR ANSWERS MAY BE IN A DIFFERENT ORDER IN THE ONLINE EXAM

Answer the following questions by selecting the most appropriate response.

1. Which of the following did the two doctors not find characteristic of the offenders they worked with?
 - a) high self-esteem
 - b) highly inflated views of themselves
 - c) thinking themselves smarter than others
 - d) thinking themselves better than others
 - e) low self-esteem
2. The research by Drs. Yochelson and Samenow produced a landmark work on:
 - a) sociological causes
 - b) psychological causes
 - c) personality
 - d) behavior
 - e) genetic predisposition
3. The core of their approach is:
 - a) afflicting the afflicted
 - b) comforting the afflicted
 - c) afflicting the comfortable
 - d) comforting the comfortable
 - e) constitutional predisposition
4. When a criminal offender enters a treatment program, they see everything in terms of:
 - a) power
 - b) control
 - c) winning
 - d) losing
 - e) all of the above
5. Because we can decide how to react to a given situation or circumstance, this approach is based on:
 - a) will power
 - b) free will
 - c) determinism
 - d) biology
 - e) conditioning
6. A large percentage of clients enter treatment in what stage?
 - a) contemplation
 - b) maintenance
 - c) action
 - d) pre-pre
 - e) precontemplation

7. The tenet that thoughts lead to unwanted trouble is basic to what approach?
 - a) cognitive mapping
 - b) cognitive behavioral
 - c) behavior modification
 - d) EMDR
 - e) cognitive restructuring
8. In the approach of this course, change is based on:
 - a) attitudes
 - b) feeling
 - c) thinking
 - d) beliefs
 - e) social forces
9. We seldom decide how we're going to be until we:
 - a) get inspired
 - b) experience a miracle
 - c) hit a dead end
 - d) get lucky
 - e) none of the above
10. People who are in serious trouble again and again can be described as:
 - a) angry
 - b) having self-pity
 - c) believe they had a raw deal
 - d) all of the above
 - e) none of the above
11. Many people who return to prison again and again are not dissatisfied with:
 - a) themselves
 - b) their situation
 - c) the police
 - d) courts
 - e) spouses
12. The one reason that a person does not admit to himself his own responsibility is:
 - a) blockage
 - b) repression
 - c) pain
 - d) suppression
 - e) biodefense

13. Which of the following is a major error in thinking?
- a) repression
 - b) counter-victimization
 - c) standard victim
 - d) victim stance
 - e) cognitive maps
14. "The drugs made me do it" is an example of:
- a) introjection
 - b) counter victimization
 - c) blaming the victim
 - d) victim stance
 - e) victim games
15. In the twelve-step approach and the therapeutic community, drugs are seen as a(n):
- a) underlying motivation
 - b) social issue
 - c) moral cause
 - d) cause
 - e) symptom
16. People who are successful in life generally don't do which of the following aspects:
- a) give up
 - b) get high
 - c) get angry
 - d) hurt others
 - e) all of the above
17. The way to remember how to avoid painful consequences based on responsible thinking is the word:
- a) REEF
 - b) THINK
 - c) FREE
 - d) FEAR
 - e) TREE
18. Offenders habitually live in a substantially _____ state of _____ awareness.
- a) increased, social
 - b) reduced, self
 - c) increased, self
 - d) reduced, ego
 - e) increased, civil

19. The emotion that offenders frequently drown in alcohol or drugs is:
- a) love
 - b) anger
 - c) fear
 - d) uncertainty
 - e) confusion
20. Dr. Samenow emphasizes again and again:
- a) doing it in little steps
 - b) doing it in large steps
 - c) doing it spontaneously
 - d) doing it instinctively
 - e) doing it naturally
21. Changing a lifetime habit is very much like:
- a) home building
 - b) body building
 - c) body work
 - d) body-mind building
 - e) bridge building
22. The sequence of change is:
- a) explore, eliminate, remember, focus
 - b) remember, focus, explore, eliminate
 - c) focus, eliminate, remember, explore
 - d) focus, eliminate, explore
 - e) focus, remember, eliminate, explore
23. The first issue in overcoming fears is:
- a) enduring difficulties
 - b) commitment
 - c) effort
 - d) confronting fears
 - e) none of the above
24. Catching errors in thinking requires a hard look into:
- a) a mirror
 - b) the past
 - c) the future
 - d) social pressures
 - e) peer pressures
25. Among reasons given by inmates for finally wanting to change is:
- a) I'm tired of my wife coming down to this prison.
 - b) This may be my only chance to change.
 - c) I'm tired of going to jail.
 - d) All of the above

26. One of the motivators for change for women inmates is the pain of separation from family, especially their children.
- a) True
 - b) False
27. Dr. Samenow tells the group they are all **except** which of the following:
- a) intelligent
 - b) knowledgeable of right from wrong
 - c) victims
 - d) expressive
 - e) knowledgeable of the laws
28. Dr. Samenow believes that criminal behavior is directly attributable to childhood abuse.
- a) True
 - b) False
29. Blaming others for your actions:
- a) is an error in thinking
 - b) makes us feel helpless
 - c) causes us to lose the power to change
 - d) makes change impossible
 - e) all of the above
30. Dr. Samenow concedes that being under the influence of alcohol or drugs can cause a person to commit acts that are "out of character" with their real values.
- a) True
 - b) False
31. In order to make changes, Dr. Samenow tells the inmates, in the beginning "you have to feel bad about yourself."
- a) True
 - b) False
32. One of the errors of thinking is that criminals tend to see *themselves* as the victims rather than considering the injury their behavior causes other people.
- a) True
 - b) False
33. Two things are basic to change:
- a) Wanting to do the right thing and dealing with destructive and addictive behavior.
 - b) Dealing with ones thinking and dealing with destructive and addictive behavior.
 - c) Wanting to do the right thing and dealing with ones thinking.

34. Instead of shutting off fear of destructive behavior, we can use fear to remind us of painful consequences.
a) True
b) False
35. Correcting an error in thinking requires all of the following **except**:
a) becoming fed up with your old ways
b) getting a support system in place
c) practicing new thinking until it becomes a lifetime habit
d) catching the error before you act on it
36. Shutting off fear is essential to gaining the confidence to change.
a) True
b) False
37. According to some inmates, successfully committing crimes can result in increased self esteem and feelings of competence.
a) True
b) False
38. The first step necessary for change to begin is:
a) Having a good support system
b) Believing you can change
c) Picturing a normal life
d) Getting sober
e) Apologizing to those you have hurt
39. Compliance is a good indicator of true change.
a) True
b) False
40. Key factors involved in change include all **except** which of the following:
a) Understanding that change is possible
b) Finding the shortcut
c) Endurance
d) Putting up with a lot of things you don't like now for greater gain in the future
41. Distorted thinking eventually leads to _____ no one wants.
a. payoffs
b. results
c. wealth
d. prestige
e. humor

42. What we do _____ with the thoughts in our minds.
- a. is accomplished
 - b. ends
 - c. is unrelated
 - d. begins
 - e. clashes
43. The inmates cite this as a reason for wanting to change:
- a. no ambition
 - b. missing their family
 - c. routine was getting old
 - d. would eventually end up dead
 - e. all of the above
44. An inmate states that his decision to commit murder was based on _____ and _____.
- a. finances, self-esteem
 - b. religion, values
 - c. frustration, anger
 - d. religion, anger
 - e. depression, values
45. Abuse and neglect suffered as a child often leads to thinking errors and bad decision making.
- a. True
 - b. False
46. One reason that a person doesn't admit to his own responsibilities is that it would be _____ to go on.
- a. easy
 - b. ridiculous
 - c. fulfilling
 - d. difficult
 - e. a short process
47. Dr. Samenow states that it is an error in thinking when a person says that "I did such and such" and then starts to point to all kinds of things outside himself.
- a. True
 - b. False
48. If we continue to think of ourselves as _____, then _____ is impossible.
- a. wealthy, poverty
 - b. victims, change
 - c. good, failure
 - d. religious, crime
 - e. evil, change

49. The men and women that Dr. Samenow worked with were:
- a. ridiculed
 - b. berated
 - c. browbeat
 - d. humiliated
 - e. treated with respect
50. In the approach of this course, change is based on:
- a. attitudes
 - b. feeling
 - c. thinking
 - d. beliefs
 - e. social forces
51. People who are in serious trouble again and again can be described as:
- a. angry
 - b. having self-pity
 - c. believe they had a raw deal
 - d. all of the above
 - e. none of the above
52. To live responsibly in this world often requires _____.
- a. money
 - b. family
 - c. instant power
 - d. an attitude
 - e. starting at the bottom
53. A crucial error is the thought process of "I want it fast and easy".
- a. True
 - b. False
54. One of the female inmates states that she never thought at all about _____.
- a. lying
 - b. who was getting hurt
 - c. the money
 - d. the drugs
 - e. being incarcerated
55. Getting rid of fear is a good way to avoid thinking errors and bad decisions.
- a. True
 - b. False

56. Fear can be used to remind us of _____.
a. good times
b. our past
c. others
d. errands
e. painful consequences
57. Many inmates feel as though the fear of change has been keeping them in a state of perpetually making bad decisions.
a. True
b. False