



CERTIFIED FACILITATOR – SAMENOW'S TACTICS: HABITS THAT BLOCK CHANGE

8 Continuing Education Credits

Asynchronous Distance Learning Course

Content Level: Intermediate

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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**

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

— Maya Angelou

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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.

Resistance to Change in Substance Use Treatment: Why Habits Persist

The habits that block change described in this course — victim thinking, attacking, casing people out, diversion, and generalization — are not merely cognitive distortions. They are behavioral patterns that have become habitual through years of reinforcement. Recent research on treatment readiness, ambivalence, engagement barriers, denial, and the cognitive architecture of criminal thinking provides an evidence base for understanding why these habits are so resistant to intervention and what conditions must be present before genuine change becomes possible.

The overlap between habitual criminal thinking and substance use populations is larger than most clinicians assume. In a study of 407 young adults entering residential substance use treatment, nearly three-quarters showed elevated criminal thinking scores on a validated measure, with stimulant and opioid use predicting the highest severity (Bakken et al., 2023). The tactics this course names — victim thinking, attacking, casing people out — are not confined to justice-involved caseloads. Clinicians working in standard residential programs are already encountering them, whether or not the client has a charge on record.

The readiness dimension of habit change — whether an individual is genuinely prepared to abandon familiar patterns — was examined in a 2022 study of 137 justice-involved young adults aged 18 to 24 who screened positive for alcohol or drug risk in an alternative sentencing program. More than half of participants were contemplating or had decided to quit or cut down substance use. However, the analysis revealed a critical distinction: personal reasons for quitting were positively correlated with readiness to change, while interpersonal reasons — pressure from family, partners, or the legal system — showed negative associations. The authors concluded that "personal reasons to quit using drugs are a potential intervention target" (O'Grady et al., 2022). For the habits this course describes, external pressure may get clients into the room, but it does not produce the internal motivation required to abandon the habits that protect them from honest self-examination. The habits persist precisely because they shield the individual from the discomfort that personal motivation for change would require them to face.

The treatment engagement barriers that habitual thinking patterns create were examined from the patient perspective in a 2025 qualitative study of 33 patients at two treatment facilities using the Health Belief Model framework. Patients showed strong treatment adherence when they perceived meaningful health improvements and family restoration benefits. Conversely, barriers including lack of awareness about treatment options and fear of legal consequences hindered initial treatment seeking. Acknowledgment of treatment needs led to greater engagement, while lack of perceived needs hindered it (Muslim et al., 2025). For the habits this course addresses, the core paradox is that these habits function by preventing the individual from perceiving that they need to change. Victim thinking reframes the problem as someone else's fault. Diversion redirects attention away from the behavior that needs examination. These are organized defenses against the perception of need that would initiate the change process.

The paradox Samenow describes — that the habits blocking change also block the client's awareness of needing to change — has a measurable correlate at the item level. In a study of methamphetamine-dependent adults, those who denied current use despite acknowledging substance-related problems (SCID item 6) scored significantly higher on Precontemplation, the stage marker for entrenched denial (Rice et al., 2022). Notably, the paper's overall correlation runs the other direction — higher total SCID severity tracked with *lower* Precontemplation scores — but the

item-level finding is the clinically meaningful one: when a client minimizes ongoing problems while continuing to use, denial spikes regardless of how their summary severity score reads. Diversion and generalization operate the same way: the more the behavior costs, the harder the tactics work to keep the cost out of view. Self-report alone will underread denial in these clients on any single global measure, which is why external corroboration and structured confrontation of the tactics are not optional.

The positive psychological resources that must be cultivated to replace habitual defensive patterns were evaluated in a 2025 systematic review of 36 positive psychological interventions across 30 publications, with meta-analysis of 8 randomized controlled trials. While these interventions appeared feasible and engaging, their effects on substance use outcomes were small and nonsignificant in randomized trials (Carlon et al., 2025). For the habit change process this course teaches, breaking habitual patterns requires more than teaching new skills — it requires immersion in a community and process that makes the old habits functionally unnecessary. The habits block change because they serve a protective function. They will only be abandoned when the individual finds something more reliable to replace them with.

The therapeutic relationship itself is one of the conditions that determines whether habitual thinking can be confronted productively. In 265 justice-involved adults with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders, the strength of the working alliance moderated measurable reductions in general, reactive, and current criminal thinking, alongside improvements in depression, anxiety, and anger symptoms (Scanlon et al., 2022). Confrontation of tactics like attacking and casing people out lands differently depending on the alliance underneath it. Without that relational foundation, pointing out a client's victim thinking reads as one more attack to defend against; with it, the same observation becomes usable material.

The best-studied method for surfacing ambivalence in substance use treatment has sharper limits than the field has historically claimed. A 2023 Cochrane review of 93 studies and 22,776 participants found that motivational interviewing produced only small-to-moderate gains over no intervention, weaker effects at follow-up, and no clear improvement in readiness to change or treatment retention compared with treatment-as-usual (Schwenker et al., 2023). For the tactics Samenow identifies, this matters: a technique designed to roll with resistance will not, on its own, dismantle habits whose entire function is to keep resistance intact. Direct naming of the tactic — the kind of work this course trains facilitators to do — is not redundant with motivational interviewing. It addresses what MI alone does not reliably move.

The broader evidence base for whether habitual behavioral patterns in justice-involved populations can change was established in a 2024 randomized controlled trial examining which individuals benefit most from structured cognitive-behavioral interventions. Among 341 justice-involved veterans, those with recent incarceration and recent convictions showed the greatest improvements in criminal associations, employment, and substance use. Veterans with elevated psychopathic traits also demonstrated greater reductions in substance use (Blonigen et al., 2024). The clients whose habits have most recently resulted in incarceration may be the most amenable to intervention — not despite their recent consequences, but because of them.

The structure of criminogenic thinking itself — the scaffolding that holds habits like victim thinking and attacking in place — was mapped in a 2025 psychometric study of 364 incarcerated Portuguese males with a mean age of 37.88 years. Using exploratory factor analysis on the Criminogenic Cognitions Scale (KMO = 0.82; Bartlett's $\chi^2 = 1,841.2$, $p < 0.001$), the authors identified a 15-item, two-factor

structure: Short-Term Orientation and Responsibility Evasion, paired with Authority Resistance. Both dimensions showed convergent validity with antisocial traits, moral disengagement, and low self-control, with composite reliability ranging from 0.74 to 0.91 (Pereira et al., 2025). The factor structure confirms what the Samenow framework has long argued clinically: the habits this course describes are not isolated tactics. They cluster together as an organized cognitive system. Responsibility evasion — the engine behind victim thinking, diversion, and generalization — and authority resistance — the engine behind attacking and casing people out — are empirically distinct but correlated dimensions. A client who evades responsibility in one domain will tend to evade it across domains. Treatment that targets only a single habit in isolation will confront the rest of the structure still standing.

The developmental window in which the habits of moral disengagement are most modifiable was quantified in a 2025 longitudinal study analyzing data from 1,349 juvenile offenders in the Pathways to Desistance Project. Using a random intercept cross-lagged panel model that controlled for stable individual differences, Chen and Sutton tracked the reciprocal relationship between moral disengagement and antisocial behavior across three age bands. Between ages 16 and 18, disengaged thinking and antisocial behavior predicted each other in both directions — a two-way traffic where cognition and behavior reinforced one another. Between ages 19 and 21, only antisocial behavior predicted moral disengagement in the following year; the cognitive targeting direction had already closed. Between ages 21 and 23, no significant cross-lagged effect was detected in either direction (Chen & Sutton, 2025). The clinical implication is direct. The tactics this course addresses are most amenable to cognitive intervention in late adolescence. By the mid-twenties, the habits have stabilized into behavior patterns that change behaviorally before they change cognitively. Earlier intervention carries a cognitive leverage that later intervention does not.

The neural gap between wanting to change and actually changing — the territory where diversion and generalization operate — was measured directly in a 2025 fMRI study of 67 adults with alcohol use disorder (20 women) followed for up to one year with daily smartphone assessments of alcohol intake and weekly intentions. Ebrahimi and colleagues used a sequential decision-making task to quantify each participant's balance between model-based (goal-directed) and model-free (habitual) behavior, alongside corresponding neural signals in the hippocampus and ventral striatum. Participants with higher model-based behavior, stronger hippocampal learning signals, and weaker ventral striatal learning signals were the ones who succeeded in aligning their actual drinking with their stated intention to cut down; those with the opposite neural signature did not (Ebrahimi et al., 2025). The finding grounds a clinical reality counselors already observe. The client who says "I'll only drink on weekends" and then drinks Tuesday is not being dishonest in the first statement. The habit system in the ventral striatum is operating independently of the goal-directed hippocampal system that formed the intention. Breaking the habits this course describes requires strengthening the goal-directed circuit, not just restating the goal.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In the 1960’s and 1970’s two doctors, one a psychiatrist and one a psychologist began working with individuals at a hospital for the criminally insane in Bethesda, Maryland. 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 with Dr. Yochelson and his project at Saint Elizabeth’s Hospital for the Criminally Insane.

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 rather 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 of the hospital setting. In fact, early in their research efforts, they noted that many of the offenders participating in the group never stopped offending.

Second, while a substantial number of the offenders came from backgrounds of poverty, abuse and neglect, the majority had siblings from these same backgrounds who had not become criminals. Also, there were many who had caring families that had done everything they knew to do to help these individuals, but to no avail. These facts made the doctors begin to turn away from focusing on a deterministic view of criminality (childhood abuse and trauma), to one that focused more on the lifestyle choices offenders make.

Third, while it was believed that these individuals must suffer from terribly low self esteem resulting from experiencing a vast array of failures in life - ranging from school to work to personal relationships - it became obvious over time that the opposite was the case! Most had highly inflated views of themselves and their abilities; thinking themselves smarter and better than others.

Other favorite 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 as well. 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, Dr.’s Yochelson and Samenow began giving up their theories of psychological and sociological causes for crime, and began looking at the thinking patterns and attitudes that led to it. They began focusing on the criminal’s **choices**, and his or her rationalizations and justifications for such behavior. They began mapping the worldview of the criminal.

Ultimately, they found a variety of thinking errors that criminals had in common regardless of age, race, social class or educational background. Their search for the cause of crime and what they eventually discovered became 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 the best way to treat him or her.

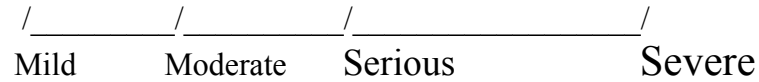
At the very core of this approach is the idea of “afflicting the comfortable, rather than comforting the afflicted.” According to this approach, what leads to lasting change in the criminal offender is becoming absolutely fed-up with him or her self - filled with self-disgust about who or what they have become. In his or her past, the criminal (very much like the addict) has had instances of self-disgust, but this has not lasted or resulted in behavioral change. Therefore the offender must – in a matter of fact and respectful manner – be constantly reminded of the consequences of his or her actions, the damaged and destroyed lives, and the fact that continuing in the same mode 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 clubs 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 him or herself of the devastating consequences of his or her past behavior.

What was also learned in this landmark research is that the criminal offender is constantly sizing up others, and that this remains true when he or she enters a treatment program as well. He or she 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, Dr.’s Yochelson and Samenow were more concerned with direct, but factual discussions in which they revealed what they knew about the criminal’s M.O. and mindset - in many instances better than the criminals themselves.

They learned not to buy into the criminals’ attempts to portray themselves as the victims rather than the victimizers (though some excel at this), they learned not to allow their efforts to be diverted by an array of irrelevant matters and issues criminals will bring up to derail the therapist, or to allow themselves to fall victim to the tactics of attack that are often used to put the therapist on the defensive.

They 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 fit themselves better to the world, were highly critical of others but had a “glass jaw” when it came to taking criticism themselves, 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 or disturbance to their own self image, 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.)

However, returning to the fact that ultimately, the criminal’s way of life had never led to anything more than fleeting satisfaction or happiness, and that without change they faced a life of increasing time incarcerated, their choices were few. They 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 tried to put on.

This course is an overview of some of the basic principles, dynamics and errors in thinking that lie at the foundation of Dr. Yochelson and Dr. 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 some of the major errors involved in shaping the irresponsible and destructive thinking of those served 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 cause them problems. The approach presented here not only provides a set of concrete, practical ways to begin to identify these errors – but to 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 decide the choices we make. These choices make a crucial difference. Through the examples provided in the group and interview sessions presented, this course teaches how to put a mirror in front of 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 Dr.’s 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 behaviors.

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 results we don’t want.
- Thoughts that lead to unwanted trouble 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 trouble their actions may have caused in the past, and forecast the trouble those thoughts may bring in a current situation 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.
- As has been identified in other treatment approaches, counselors often assume that because clients have entered treatment, 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, many have not truly considered the full ramifications of their actions on others or even on their own lives.
- Beginning to see the role of thinking in keeping us locked in destructive patterns of behavior is often what provides the motivation and the commitment needed to change.

When any of us change our thinking, we change what we end up doing. A major roadblock to recovery is the temptation to take a shortcut in order to accomplish something of value. But by stopping and catching thoughts – before acting – our clients can begin to take a different direction in life.

COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

with Stanton E. Samenow, Ph.D.

Parts IV, V and VI

TACTICS

Habits That Block Change

Leader’s Guide and Workbook

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Special Contributions and Original Concepts by:
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Evidence Based Treatment

This program is Evidence-Based Treatment 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 study of criminal behavior ever conducted at that time. In this study, they identified “criminal 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 DVD’s and this workbook is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). CBT has been found to be effective in more than 1,000 outcome studies.

These DVD’s 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 DVD’s 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 progress through the stages of change and is 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 an invaluable tool to do the course upon entry and re-take close to discharge. The differences could be anything short of astounding. This basic rechanneling of thought processes can create more openness and willingness with the participant to follow 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 a bit of work you can create your own specific Evidence Based Treatment program! Should you create one of these, we would love it if you would share your results with us.

All 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 more of your clients.

*T*actics are...

...ways of acting that block change.

They keep people stuck in destructive lives.

or clients entering treatment, counseling, or any program for change, awareness of Tactics and how to overcome them can **reduce resistance** to real communication and learning, and open the door to change.

Parts I, II and III

of Commitment to Change reveal destructive thoughts:

Errors in Thinking — and how to overcome them.

Parts IV, V and VI

deepen the learning,

revealing how those thoughts lead to destructive actions:

Tactics — and how to move beyond them,

toward a life that is truly free.

Common ***Tactics*** include...

Verbal ATTACK:

“You’re the problem, not me!”

CASING PEOPLE OUT:
hear.”

“I’ll feed you what you want to

SILENCE:

“I won’t talk; I’ll shut down.”

...and others we see every day.

**Each program can be used independently.
Together, their power is enhanced.**

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Leading Session Nine 3 STEPS FOR CHANGE

(With the Preview Session, the total number of meetings or sessions is ten.)
To Re-Order Any Part of This Program.....

WHY A PROGRAM ABOUT *TACTICS — Habits That Block Change?*

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 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 unique patterns of thinking — and behavioral “*Tactics*.” Frequently, these *Tactics* prevented them from looking honestly at their “*errors in thinking*” — thoughts which did not accurately reflect reality — and led to actions with destructive consequences. They also blocked any possibility of change, and so kept people stuck in destructive lives.

Could habitual offenders learn to correct these errors and eliminate their destructive *Tactics*? If their thinking and *Tactics* *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 are now conducted in several countries — are leading responsible, productive lives.

The corrections community has embraced this approach in many ways — along with educators, youth workers and other mental health and social service professionals. Programs and workshops are sponsored by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, NCI and Departments of Corrections in a great many states. 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, DVD-based program.

Parts I, II and III reveal fundamental *errors in thinking* — and ways to overcome them. **Parts IV, V and VI** expose the common, everyday *behaviors* which result from those errors — and how to replace them with habits which lead to responsible lives.

THE PROGRAM IN BRIEF

A FLEXIBLE PROGRAM -- Adapts to Your Needs

- **DVDs are divided into sessions...**

...which can be viewed separately; they contain **optional pauses** for discussion.

- **Power Point Presentation...**

...provide questions and challenges to provoke discussion and thought.

- **Program Time:** Up to ten sessions: 15 minutes to 2 hours per session.

If you have *limited time*...

- Simply show one or more **DVDs, or sessions within a DVD**, and lead a brief discussion.

- Use a related **reading/worksheet** if you wish.

- Select sessions to **support existing programs**.

- **Guidelines** for leading shorter and longer sessions are found throughout this guide (*see Table of Contents*).

If you want a *comprehensive program*...

Conduct the Learning Gains Measures Pre-test

Guidelines are provided for leading up to **10 full sessions** — for **clients** and/or **staff**.

Each session contains **reading assignments** and **worksheets** for clients and special staff training worksheets.

Conduct the Learning Gains Measures Post-test

WHO IS THE PROGRAM FOR?

For Clients:

- Convicted offenders
- People in treatment or at risk for substance abuse
- People in recovery
- Youth and adults — those at risk or in counseling and treatment for destructive behaviors
- Convicted sex offenders
- Student or adult groups — as a prevention tool
- Families of people in recovery, offenders, ex-offenders

For Staff Training:

- For all staff who have contact with offenders or clients in treatment
- For those who will lead any counseling or instruction program
- For those who can benefit from further knowledge of *Tactics* which interfere with communication, learning and change
- For those who can benefit from a more complete understanding of destructive or criminal behavior

QUICK START:

If you choose, you can **lead a PREVIEW SESSION** *before showing the first DVD.*

This session starts your group thinking about the need to change.

Turn to the guidelines for Leading the PREVIEW SESSION on page 10.

Make a copy of the Preview Session Reading and Worksheet for each participant.

Or...

...you can begin by **showing DVD Part IV** and then leading a discussion (See *Leading SESSION ONE*, on page 17.

Copy and assign the Reading and Worksheet (or Staff Training Worksheet) for *Session One*.

If time allows, view each DVD before showing it to your group.

Session by session, **this guide will support you** in presenting this program.

HOW DOES THIS PROGRAM SUPPORT OTHER APPROACHES AND PROGRAMS?

This program encourages an honest look in the mirror. The DVDs, readings, worksheets and staff training worksheets provide an opportunity for an unflinching look at our lives and our roles in creating them. This can serve as a valuable contribution — a powerful complement to existing programs.

The heart of this approach — taking personal responsibility for our decisions — is a concept shared by many programs. People in treatment and recovery, for example, are encouraged to take responsibility for their lives. This program assists participants to become aware of their thinking, and their habitual behaviors, or *Tactics*, which prevent them from being open to change. This program provides practical ways to begin — to identify and eliminate *Tactics* — and **open the door to responsible choices**.

For staff, the training worksheets aid in identifying how these *Tactics* are used by clients with whom they interact, and how to respond effectively.

ABOUT STANTON SAMENOW, Ph.D.

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. In previous administrations 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 worked side by side with Dr. Samuel Yochelson, as they pioneered the research which uncovered the key role played by thinking patterns and behavioral *Tactics*. Out of that work came the concept of “***Tactics which obstruct effective corrective teaching.***” He is the author of several books, including *Inside the Criminal Mind*, *Before It’s Too Late* and *Straight Talk About Criminals*. During his eight years as research psychologist at Saint Elisabeth Hospital in Washington, D.C., he co-authored the three-volume, ground-breaking study, *The Criminal Personality*.

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 4 – 6

1. Tactics are habits that
 - a. Help us manage life
 - b. Block others from attacking us
 - c. Block change
 - d. Help others manipulate us
2. The tactic we use when we are defensive is
 - a. To attack someone else or think “You’re the problem”
 - b. To fight with others or think “I’m bigger than you”
 - c. To remind ourselves of what matters or think “Who cares”
 - d. All of the above
3. One purpose of a tactic is
 - a. To show how strong we are
 - b. To hide the problems of our family
 - c. To show everyone we are smart
 - d. To hide or cover our shortcomings
4. The tactic of diversion, or changing the subject, lets you
 - a. Take control of the situation
 - b. Find out about other people
 - c. Take a break from explaining yourself
 - d. All of the above
5. Diversion blocks change because
 - a. You are helping the other person instead of yourself
 - b. You are lying to yourself and other people
 - c. No one is listening to you
 - d. The other person lies to you
6. The tactic of minimizing blocks change because
 - a. You don’t look at the severity of the behavior
 - b. You lose weight
 - c. You fail to count the problems correctly
 - d. You face up to the problem

Certified Facilitator – Samenow’s Tactics: Habits That Block Change

7. When we tell ourselves that the drugs or alcohol caused our behavior, we are forgetting
 - a. People won’t believe us
 - b. Our behavior is caused by other people
 - c. We don’t have to defend ourselves
 - d. We chose to take the drugs or alcohol
8. The one example of the tactic of Minimizing is
 - a. Saying or thinking “it’s no big deal”
 - b. Saying or thinking little
 - c. Saying or thinking the other person is offensive
 - d. All of the above
9. When we use the tactic of casing people out, we
 - a. Try to figure out how to cover all our bases
 - b. Try to have empathy for the other person
 - c. Try to tell them how we want to improve so they can help us with our future
 - d. Try to tell them what they want to hear so we can do what we want
10. One example of the tactic of Generalization is saying
 - a. “This is a general problem”
 - b. “Everyone does it. Why not me?”
 - c. “Everyone has a problem, but not me”
 - d. “This is not my fault”
11. Dr. Samenow points out that we all have to decide how we are going to lead our lives
 - a. Based on how we were raised
 - b. According to the law
 - c. Despite how others behave
 - d. While we are incarcerated
12. The three purposes of silence are
 - a. You don’t reveal anything, to control the other person, as a weapon to get at somebody
 - b. You don’t reveal anything, you get to keep secrets, you arrange the truth
 - c. You don’t have to talk to others, to control the other person, as a way to keep secrets
 - d. You don’t have to talk to others, to allow the other person to talk, as a way to have empathy
13. When we use the tactic of silence to prevent change, we are

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- a. Preserving our dignity
 - b. Allowing the other person to talk
 - c. Not open to constructive criticism or open to any change or help
 - d. Not sure of how to express ourselves or how to help the other person
14. Another way to say, “Our actions begin in the mind” is
- a. Thoughts trigger actions
 - b. Our mind is stronger than our actions
 - c. Our actions are stronger than our thoughts
 - d. All of the above
15. Dr. Samenow points out that we go on the attack or shut down when
- a. We think we are right
 - b. We know we can win the argument
 - c. We are shy
 - d. We are afraid
16. Another way to express the idea “I don’t feel safe, so I’ll shut down” is
- a. I fear you, so I’ll get arrested
 - b. I fear disclosure, so I won’t face the problem
 - c. I can control this situation, so I will talk my way out of it
 - d. All of the above
17. When we engage in the error in thinking of making assumptions about people, we think
- a. “They’re all the same, so I won’t deal with any of them”
 - b. “They’re all different, so I should give this person a chance”
 - c. “They’re all out to get me, so I will attack first”
 - d. “They’re wearing a tie, so they must be uptight”
18. Change is frightening because of
- a. Feeling like we have no skills
 - b. Thinking we may fail
 - c. Facing the unknown
 - d. All of the above
19. According to Dr. Samenow, the only choice we have is to
- a. Go back to our old life
 - b. Quit living
 - c. Decide to change, even though there are no guarantees
 - d. All of the above

20. We stop using the tactics by following these steps

- a. Catch yourself after it has happened then catch yourself before you use a tactic then catch the error in thinking which will prevent the tactic from manifesting
- b. Catch yourself as it happens then catch yourself after it has happened then catch yourself and stop
- c. Catch yourself after it has happened then catch the other person responding then work with the other person to resolve the issue
- d. Catch yourself as it happens then catch yourself before the other person responds then resolve the problem with the other person

Leading the PREVIEW SESSION

(Before showing the DVD)

Do You Have Any Reason To Change? What Gets In The Way?

This session is designed to take place before viewing the DVD. It’s purpose is to create a readiness for the program which follows by raising questions about the need for change and certain ways of acting — *tactics* — that prevent change. Clients or students may not initially grasp this relationship. The goal is to start them thinking about their need for change and what is preventing them from making changes.

NOTE: As mentioned in the introduction to this program, guidelines for **shorter and longer sessions** are always provided, as below.

Overhead transparencies are available for all sessions *after* this one.

For staff training, separate readings and worksheets are provided, beginning with Session One.

15 to 30 minute session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Identify painful consequences of irresponsible behavior.

GUIDELINES:

— Discuss these statements which will be seen in DVD Part IV, also found in the Reading for this session:

“I thought the money, the lifestyle, everything was good, but where did it get me?”

“I know if I don’t change I will come back here (prison) or be here the rest of my life.”

“My potential is better than this.”

- Discuss for each participant in the group:
Is there a need for change? Is there a desire for change?

- Ask: *What kinds of behaviors prevent people from making responsible changes in their lives? Continued...*

Leading the PREVIEW SESSION continued

1/2 to 1 hour session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Understand *Tactics* as harmful habits — ways of acting — that prevent responsible change.

GUIDELINES:

— Begin with the discussion above, then introduce and discuss the idea of *Tactics* as harmful habits which allow us to hide from ourselves and others. That prevent us from looking honestly at ourselves — seeing a realistic view of what we have become.

- *How does the use of Tactics cause problems for us?*
- *How does it build walls between us and those who could help us?*
- *How does the use of Tactics prevent us from seeing ourselves accurately?*

— Ask participants to complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session (see the following pages).

— If time allows, discuss their observations of the exercise. Keep the focus on habits in our behavior that prevent change.

READING for PREVIEW SESSION

Do You Have Any Reason To Change?

If you’re satisfied with the way your life is going, you have no reason to change. But if you’re tired of the life you’re living — if you want to know how it feels to be truly free — then you may want to change. For many, change is a matter of life or death.

But change is never easy. Our actions become habits; we repeat them over and over — and get the same results, over and over.

In the DVDs of this program, you will see addicts and offenders struggling to *change* lifelong habits — ways of thinking and acting — because they want a better life.

Here are some things they said about their own lives, and why they want to change:

“I thought the money, the lifestyle, everything was good. But where did it get me? I don’t have anything.”

“I know if I don’t change I will come back here (prison) or be here the rest of my life.”

“I’m without my family, my children are suffering... This is no kind of life.”

“Is this my destination? Is this it?”

Do any of those statements apply to you?

In the DVDs, you’ll watch offenders and addicts as they actually learn *ways to change*. They begin by *looking at themselves* — that’s always the key.

And you’ll see them *accepting* help — another key.

What they discover is that certain ways of acting — called “tactics” — actually *prevent* change. Here are some examples of tactics:

- Verbal ATTACK: Saying, *“You’re the problem, not me.”*
- CASING PEOPLE OUT: *“I’ll feed you what you want to hear.”*
- MINIMIZING: *“It’s no big deal.”*

How do these tactics block change? They build walls — cut off communication with people who want to help. And they prevent us from looking at ourselves.

If you really want to change, take an honest look at yourself. This program can help you to become *aware* of any tactics you use — and take a step toward a life that is truly free.

WORKSHEET for PREVIEW SESSION

Some Habits Keep Us Stuck

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Changing a habit is very hard.

When we practice the same behavior over and over again, it becomes a habit. Some habits are useful; they help us to get our mental and physical needs met (regular work, food, exercise, rest). Some habits seem to work for us in the short run — but eventually cause harm to us or others (stealing, lying, violence).

If we want to change, an important step is to become *aware* of habits that harm us and others. Then we have to learn how to stop the harmful habits — and learn new ones.

List any habits you've had that have resulted in harm to yourself.

List any habits you've had that have resulted in harm to others.

Some habits (lying, bad temper, blaming others) actually *stop* us from making changes — they keep us stuck in the same old thinking and actions. List **all** of your habits — past or present — that might stop you from making responsible changes:

When our lives becomes so painful that we can't tolerate it any more, we may realize our need for responsible change. List **any** of the painful results in your life that you no longer want to experience:

Leading SESSION ONE

Tactic: **ATTACK** — *“You’re the problem, not me.”*

Show and discuss DVD **Part IV** from the beginning through the end of *Session One*. The session ends when “Optional Pause” appears on the screen.

Choose the session or meeting time (below) you have available.

Optional: Before viewing the DVD or at any time after, project the **overhead transparency** for this session or write the information from the transparency on a board or flipchart as an alternate guide for discussion and to provoke thought.

15 to 30 minute session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify how attacking others with words shifts the focus away from our own actions.

GUIDELINES:

Ask students what the DVD showed about the tactic of attack.

- *What did people in the DVD say about using the tactic of attack?*
- *How did they demonstrate this tactic in the DVD?*
- *Why do people use this tactic?*
- *How have you used this tactic on others when you didn't want to face or deal with a situation?*
- *What have been some of the negative results in your life when you have resorted to using this tactic?*

As time allows, pass out the worksheet for this session and discuss the Reading for Session One. The work can be given as a homework assignment and discussed at a later time.

1/2 to 1 hour session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify how using this tactic affects us and others.

GUIDELINES:

- Discuss the questions listed above, then have the participants complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

- After completing the worksheet, ask participants to discuss their beliefs regarding how this tactic applies to them.
- If time allows, have participants discuss their answers to each worksheet question.
- End this session by asking participants to discuss how their use of this tactic has affected other people in their lives.

READING for SESSION ONE

Tactic: ***ATTACK*** — “*You’re the problem, not me.*”

We know that change is possible; people have turned their lives around. But change is never easy.

Why is change so difficult? What are the things that keep us *stuck*?

One of the habits that blocks change is *attacking* other people with words. We say things like, “*You’re the problem — not me.*”

How does a verbal *attack* block change? If you’re talking to someone whose job is to help you — a counselor, group leader, P.O., boss — you’ve pointed the finger at *them*. You’ve cut them off; built a wall. You’ve taken the spotlight away from yourself.

One of the men in the DVD says,

“If I attack him, I keep him from asking that question again.”

We can’t begin to change until we take an honest look at ourselves.

Looking at ourselves — things we’ve done — how we need to change — is *painful*. One way to protect our feelings is to blame or attack the other person with words. We’re in danger of using that tactic when we feel unsafe, exposed, or on the spot.

If we truly want to be free, we have to do something that is very difficult: look at the destructive things we’ve done and say, “*I did that. I want to change.*” We have to admit — to ourselves and to people who want to help — that we are responsible. Then change is possible.

ROLE –PLAY SESSION ONE

Attack: “You’re the problem, not me.”

In this session Dr. Samenow helps the participants identify a tactic that blocks change, attacking others rather than face the problem. In one interview, Dr. Samenow confronts a participant who claims he is a good person though he has committed many crimes. Once confronted, the participant acknowledges that he used a tactic to block change, attack.

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 accept confrontation without attacking the other person. Think of a situation in which you were being confronted about something you did that was not acceptable and instead of accepting the confrontation, you attacked the other person. Write about that below.

Now think of a healthier way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind that when we are confronted by others, it is difficult to **not** grow defensive. One way to handle confrontation is to simply repeat the confrontation. For instance, if a student is confronting me with the accusation that I have treated him unfairly in class, instead of pointing out all his bad behaviors, a healthier way to handle the situation would be for me to repeat, “So, you feel I am treating you unfairly in class. Can you explain how I am treating you unfairly, in your opinion?” This allows me time to think about the confrontation and to further explore the other person’s point of view. Use the space below to write about how you might better handle the confrontation you have written about.

Now write a script in which the other person is confronting you about a past behavior and you are responding by listening and not attacking the other person. A prompt by the “other person” has been provided to get you started.

Other person: Why do you keep doing that?

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 ONE

Tactic: ***ATTACK*** — “*You’re the problem, not me.*”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

How much time have you spent living in institutions, hospitals, prisons, jails, treatment programs, and on probation or parole?

What do you think are the reasons you find yourself in these situations?

If you had a DVDtape of your life, what *patterns of behavior* would you see that have caused harm to yourself and others?

Recall a time when you have been confronted by others, and have used the tactic of ATTACK: “*You’re the problem, not me,*” to shift the spotlight off yourself. Describe what happened:

Recall a time when you *blamed* another person for something rather than accept the responsibility yourself.

Describe how blaming them took the spotlight off yourself.

Recall a time when you missed an opportunity to open up and admit to your problems, worries and shortcomings.

Describe how using this tactic might stand in the way of change.

STAFF TRAINING WORKSHEET for SESSION ONE

Tactic: ***ATTACK — “You’re the problem, not me.”***

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Tactics are behaviors that people use when they feel exposed or on the spot. Children sometimes use Tactics as a way of coping; they can become a lifelong habit.

The Tactic of verbal *Attack* is one we’re likely to see often. As agents of change, we may encounter it daily. If we have any interaction with convicted offenders or clients in treatment, we need to be able to recognize this Tactic, and not take it personally. We need to see it for what it is: an attempt to “get off the hook” — to relieve discomfort — by shifting attention to someone else.

When clients use Tactics, they avoid looking at themselves and taking responsibility. That’s why Tactics block change. Clients will need to understand this before change can be effective. When they attempt to use this Tactic, it is important that we assist them to *put the focus back on them*.

Whatever our position — staff or administrators — if we have any interaction with clients and/or convicted offenders, we need to be able to respond effectively to this Tactic.

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The following questions are designed to help you think about situations when this *Tactic* arises — and consider effective ways to deal with it.

Recall a recent situation when a client/offender used this *Tactic*. How did the client/offender act? Write the exact words (as close as you can recall) that he or she said to you:

How did you feel?

How did you react? What did you say or do?

How did you (or could you have) put the focus back on the client/offender?

Leading SESSION TWO

Tactic:

DIVERSION — “I’m changing the subject.”

View *Session Two* in DVD Part IV. The session ends when “Optional Pause” appears on the screen.

Optional: Before viewing the DVD or at any time after, project the **overhead transparency** for this session or write the information from the transparency on a board or flipchart as an alternate guide for discussion and to provoke thought.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify how changing the subject shifts the spotlight away from ourselves.

GUIDELINES:

— Ask students about their observations regarding the tactic of diversion:

- *What did people in the DVD say about using the tactic of diversion?*
- *How did they demonstrate this tactic in the DVD?*
- *Describe some of the ways you have found yourself using this tactic on others.*
- *Why do people use this tactic?* (Discuss shifting the spotlight away from ourselves — avoiding an honest look in the mirror.)

— As time allows, pass out the worksheet for this session and discuss the *Reading for Session Two*. The work can be given as a homework assignment and discussed at a later time.

1/2 to 1 hour session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify how using this tactic affects others — and how it affects us.

GUIDELINES:

— After discussing the questions above, have participants complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

— After completing the worksheet, ask participants to discuss their beliefs regarding how this tactic applies to them.

— If time allows, have participants discuss their answers to each worksheet question.

— End this session by asking participants to discuss how their use of this tactic has affected other people in their lives.

READING for SESSION TWO

Tactic:

DIVERSION — “I’m changing the subject.”

Has this ever happened to you?... You try to talk with someone about something important — and they change the subject. That’s the tactic of *diversion*.

Changing the subject is another way to shift the spotlight away from ourselves.

We do it when we don’t want to feel exposed. We try to force people to look at other things, not what is really happening. We try to avoid dealing with the truth. We try to fool family and friends, counselors and others who could help us — if we would let them.

People use *diversion* to control a situation — and hide from the truth. It’s another habit that keeps people stuck in destructive lives.

Some people *enjoy* using diversion tactics. They believe they have won or defeated others. They feel powerful and look for opportunities to practice this tactic.

We can even use this tactic with *ourselves*. We try to avoid facing the truth about what we’ve done and what it has cost us and others. We may come to *believe* our own lies and excuses.

We might *say* we want to change. We might try to *look* as if we’re changing. But reality shows whether we’ve truly changed — or whether we’re only fooling ourselves.

If we’re serious about change, we need to *notice* every time we use this tactic. Then we can *stop* changing the subject — and be honest with ourselves and others.

Then we can begin to take responsibility for our actions. That’s a giant step on the road to becoming free.

ROLE-PLAY SESSION TWO

Diversion: “I’m changing the subject.”

In this session you watched an interview of one of the participants which illustrated a tactic we often use to avoid change, diversion or changing the subject. One way to avoid using tactics 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 use of this tactic.

Think of a situation in which you believe you were being confronted and you changed the subject. For instance, in the video, one participant described how he gave his partner \$40 to divert the attention away from the fact that he had wasted the rest of the money. Think of a time you changed the subject to avoid confrontation and write about that below.

Now think of a healthier way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind that when we are confronted, if we don’t listen to and respond honestly to the confrontation, we will avoid change. Write about a way you could listen to the confrontation and respond to it honestly below.

Now 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: Why did you do that?

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 TWO

Tactic:

DIVERSION — “I’m changing the subject.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Describe a time when you were confronted by someone, and you used some *diversion* tactics.

What were some of the things you said or did to get the focus off you?

Imagine you were faced with that same situation today. How could you face the problem responsibly? What words would you use?

STAFF TRAINING for SESSION TWO

Tactic:

DIVERSION — “I’m changing the subject.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

In any situation — wherever we encounter *Diversion* tactics — we can call attention to their use. We can encourage clients to change course and take responsibility for their actions.

For example, saying, “*Mr. Jones this problem is not about me, it’s about you,*” can be enough to keep the discussion on track.

Remember not to take it personally, even if the client tries to make it personal! Underneath his attempt to manipulate you away from the subject at hand is his fear of being exposed. Be professional and remain calm.

Describe a recent situation when someone used the tactic of *Diversion* on you. What did he or she actually say or do that demonstrated this *Tactic*?

How did you deal with the situation; what did you say or do?

How might you deal with that situation today?

Leading SESSION THREE

Tactic:

MINIMIZING — “It’s no big deal.”

View *Session Three* in DVD Part IV. At the end, there is a summary of content.

Optional: Before viewing the DVD or at any time after, project the **overhead transparency** for this session or write the information from the transparency on a board or flipchart as an alternate guide for discussion and to provoke thought.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify how minimizing prevents us from seeing the real consequences of our actions.

GUIDELINES:

— Ask students about their observations regarding the tactic of minimization:

- *What did people in the DVD say about using the tactic of minimizing?*
- *How was this tactic demonstrated in the DVD?*
- *Why does this tactic prevent a person from making responsible changes?*
- *Describe some situations where people use this tactic.*

— As time allows, pass out the worksheet for this session, and discuss the Reading for Session Three. The work can be given as a homework assignment and discussed at a later time.

1/2 to 1 hour session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify how minimizing hides the truth from others — and from ourselves.

GUIDELINES:

— After discussing the questions listed above, have participants complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

— If time allows, have participants discuss their answers to each worksheet question. Ask them to discuss how their use of this tactic has affected other people in their lives.

READING for SESSION THREE

Tactic:

MINIMIZING — “It’s no big deal.”

When people do something destructive, they often say, “*Sure, I did it. But it was*

no big deal.” They try to **minimize** what they’ve done.

Example: “*When I rob a store, I’m just robbing a business, not an individual. Nobody gets hurt.*”

Fact: The people in the store are being harmed, perhaps not physically, but emotionally.

Would you want your wife or husband— or your child — in a store while it’s being robbed? The store owner is harmed because customers get scared off. People in the neighborhood feel afraid, long after the crime.

Example: “*If I wasn’t drunk or stoned, I wouldn’t have done that.*”

Fact: We **choose** to take drugs or drink — knowing that certain harmful things might happen. If we have had problems in the past while under the influence, we know we are taking a risk of those things happening again.

If we tell ourselves, “*It’s no big deal,*” then we can do what we want — and pretend not to see the consequences.

Example: “*If I get caught committing another crime, it’s no big deal to go back to prison.*”

Fact: Years spent living in an institution is time away from family and friends. It’s lost time. We can never replace it. There is also the danger that we will become people who can only function in an institution.

How does this tactic keep us stuck? It allows us to lie to ourselves — to hide from the truth. If you want to change, look at the *truth* of what you’ve done. Then you’ll have *reason* to change.

A good place to begin is by looking at the times you’ve used this tactic.

ROLE-PLAY SESSION THREE

Minimizing “It’s no big deal.”

In this session you watched an interview of one of the participants which illustrated a tactic we often use to avoid change, minimizing or telling ourselves and others that “It’s no big deal.” One way to avoid using this tactic 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 use of this tactic.

Think of a situation in which you told yourself and others that your behavior was “no big deal.” Write about that below.

Now think of a healthier way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind that by minimizing a situation, we reduce our motivation to change the situation. It might be better to let the person confronting you to explain the importance of the situation to him or her. Write about how that might look below.

Now 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 “you” has been provided to get you started.

You: It was no big deal.

Other Person:

You:

Other Person:

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

Tactic:

MINIMIZING — “It’s no big deal.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Describe a situation when you minimized your actions to another person.
What did you say or do to convince that person it was not that bad?

Imagine that you were in the same situation today. What could you say or do if you did not minimize?

Recall another time when you minimized something to yourself — to make yourself feel better — or to give yourself permission to do something that could cause trouble. What were the words or thoughts you used?

Those words or thoughts can be like alarm bells for you now. Watch for them; they can help you change.

Now imagine a situation that could actually happen. You *catch* yourself using those same words or thoughts to minimize — and then you *change* your thinking and behavior in a positive way. Describe the situation and what happens.

STAFF WORKSHEET for SESSION THREE

Tactic:

MINIMIZING — “It’s no big deal.”

Minimization tactics can be very subtle. Initially, the tactic might appear to be a reasonable excuse. Sometimes it’s as simple as, “*I forgot,*” or “*I didn’t know.*” These are not reasonable excuses for people with deeply ingrained, irresponsible habits. These are excuses they use to prevent themselves from changing.

Minimization tactics can also be very direct and obvious: “*I did not do what I’m accused of.*” Or, “*I was only driving the car; I didn’t know they were going to rob someone.*”

We need to listen carefully to what is being said. We can agree that everyone forgets things at times, and we can point out that it is our responsibility to remember. For example: “*I understand that you may have forgotten your appointment. But it is **your responsibility** to make it to these appointments. What can you do to make sure you get here on time?*”

Describe a recent situation when someone tried to minimize their actions or escape responsibility. What did they say or do that demonstrated this tactic?

How did you deal with the situation?

At times, we've all used this tactic on *ourselves*. Describe a time when you did that (for example, to avoid quitting smoking or losing weight or some other habit). What were the words in your head?

How might you react to the same words in your head the next time you use them?

Leading SESSION FOUR

Tactic:

CASING PEOPLE OUT — “I’ll feed you what you want.”

Show *Session Four* in DVD Part V. The session ends when “Optional Pause” appears on the screen.

Optional: Before viewing the DVD or at any time after, project the **overhead transparency** for this session or write the information from the transparency on a board or flipchart as an alternate guide for discussion and to provoke thought.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify how telling people what they want to hear is basically lying; it shows no real desire for change.

GUIDELINES:

— Ask students about their thoughts and observations regarding the tactic of casing people out.

- *What is the temporary benefit of lying to someone by telling them what they want to hear?*
- *How was this tactic demonstrated in the DVD?*
- *Why does this tactic prevent someone from making responsible changes?*
- *Describe some situations where people use this tactic.*

— As time allows, pass out the worksheet for this session, and discuss the Reading for Session Four. The work can be given as a homework assignment and discussed at a later time.

1/2 to 1 hour session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify how compliance is a temporary smoke screen which eventually stops working.

GUIDELINES:

- After discussing the questions above, have participants complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.
- If time allows, have participants discuss their answers to each worksheet question. End this session by asking participants to discuss how their use of this tactic has affected other people in their lives.

READING for SESSION FOUR

Tactic:

CASING PEOPLE OUT — “I’ll feed you what you want.”

When we “case people out,” we look for their weakness. We listen for what we think they want to hear. Once we think we understand what the person wants, we feed it to them.

We’re hoping to get something from them — or to get them off our back. If we want something from them, we may say something to put their fears at ease, or give them confidence in us, or tell a lie to satisfy them.

Example: To a Parole Officer — *“Oh yes sir, I’ll do everything you have lined up for me.”*

Reality: We might have no intention of doing what we promise.

If we want to get them off our back, we feed them what we think they want to hear — hoping they will leave us alone, move on or stop confronting us.

Example: We comply with *some* of the conditions of parole or probation to convince our P.O. that we’re making progress. Meanwhile, we continue to get high or do crimes.

Reality: Our compliance may be a smoke screen. In reality, we may be doing dope or drinking or breaking the law. Eventually it quits working, when our addiction gets out of control, or we’re caught committing another crime.

Some of us learn at a very young age how to case people out and feed them what we think they want to hear. We learn how to manipulate our parents, school officials, probation officers and the courts. It becomes a habit: we do it automatically. We may not even be *aware* we’re doing it.

In an institution, we have many opportunities to practice this habit. We tell case managers, parole boards and family members what we think they want

to hear — in the hope of being released sooner. We might have no intention of honoring those promises or conditions of release.

Casing people out, feeding them what they want, often works — in the short run. But if we continue to use this tactic, we will eventually fail, because we’re not facing the truth. If we really want to change and be free, we have to *realize* when we’re using this tactic — or about to use it — and have the courage to deal with the truth.

ROLE-PLAY SESSION FOUR

Casing People Out “I’ll feed you what you want.”

In this session Dr. Samenow used a participant’s interview to illustrate a tactic we often use to avoid change, casing people out or thinking, “I’ll tell you what you want to hear.” One way to avoid using this tactic 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 use of this tactic.

Think of a situation in which you were confronted and instead of discussing the situation with the other person, you told him or her what you thought he or she wanted to hear and write a brief description of that situation below.

Now think of a healthier way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind that only through honestly and calmly expressing your opinion of the situation and listening to the other person’s opinion of the situation can a resolution be found. Write about that below.

Now 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: Why do you always do that?

You:

Other Person:

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 FOUR

Tactic:

CASING PEOPLE OUT — “I’ll feed you what you want.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Recall a time when you told someone what you thought they wanted to hear, but it resulted in problems for you. Describe the basic situation (not what you said).

What did you “feed” them?

What were the words in your head that gave you permission to do this?

The tactic might have worked at first, but describe what happened in the end.

What could you have done that would have been more honest and less harmful for you and others?

STAFF WORKSHEET for SESSION FOUR

Tactic:

CASING PEOPLE OUT — “I’ll feed you what you want.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

This tactic is one you’ve seen — or will see — often: offenders or clients try to figure out what you want to hear, then tell you all the “right” things.

One reason it’s common is because it often works.

This tactic can include telling only *part* of the truth, to “look good” and conceal true intentions or past actions. Many tactics can be combined, such as lying, vagueness and changing the subject.

Becoming more aware of this tactic allows us to gain an important insight. It can help us to distinguish between *temporary compliance* and a true desire to change. The difference may not be apparent at first. But there is a simple test: time. Time and behavior eventually show whether a person is sincere. Our objectivity and professionalism can keep us from being too gullible or too cynical.

If you suspect someone is not sincere, only feeding you what you want to hear, how would you deal with it?

Consider the following example: *“Mr. Jones, you said you’re willing to comply with these conditions. Tell me how you plan to do this.”*

A. What insights could you possibly gain by asking this question?

B. How would you monitor this client’s progress?

Leading SESSION FIVE

Tactic:

GENERALIZATION — “Everyone Does It, Why Not Me?”

View *Session Five* in DVD Part V. The session ends when “Optional Pause” appears on the screen.

Optional: Before viewing the DVD or at any time after, project the **overhead transparency** for this session or write the information from the transparency on a board or flipchart as an alternate guide for discussion and to provoke thought.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify the results of this tactic: a distorted view of our harmful actions negative consequences.

GUIDELINES:

— Ask participants about their observations regarding the tactic of generalization:

- *What do we hope to accomplish when we generalize a point to absurdity?*
- *How was this tactic demonstrated in the DVD?*
- *How does this tactic prevent people from making responsible changes?*
- *Describe some of situations where people use this tactic.*

— As time allows, pass out the worksheet for this session, and discuss the Reading for Session Five. The work can be given as a homework assignment and discussed at a later time.

1/2 to 1 hour session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: To focus on others’ mistakes takes the spotlight away from our own irresponsible behaviors.

GUIDELINES:

— After discussing the questions above, have participants complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

— If time allows, have participants discuss their answers to each worksheet question. End this session by asking participants to discuss how their use of this tactic has affected other people in their lives.

READING for SESSION FIVE

Tactic:

GENERALIZATION — “Everyone Does It. Why Not Me?”

If you like the life you have, keep doing what you're doing. If you want to change, find out *how you get yourself into trouble*.

One of the surest roads to trouble is to avoid the truth; to lie to yourself. Then you won't have to face what you've done. You won't see any reason to change.

If you want a different life, have the courage to look at the ways we lie to ourselves and others. There are many ways we can lie. Every Tactic is a way to avoid the truth.

Saying, “*Everybody else does it. Why can't I?*,” is another way to cover up the truth about destructive acts. It's a way to avoid our own responsibility.

Example: “*You kept a dollar in change that didn't belong to you. You're no different than someone who robs a bank.*”

Fact: It's true that keeping change that does not belong to us is a form of stealing. Honest people find a way to return the money. Still, saying a simple mistake or a small slip is the *same* as bank robbery is absurd. The possible harm to ourselves and others is enormously different. It's an easy way to hide from the truth.

It's easy to find reasons to justify illegal or immoral actions.

Example: “*Look at all the politicians who lie and steal. I'm no worse than they are. If they can do it, why can't I?*”

Fact: It's true that there are cases of politicians and others in authority who have been caught lying and stealing. But if we want to change,

we must look at *ourselves*. *We can only control and change our own behavior.*
No matter what others do, personal change requires **keeping the focus on ourselves**.

ROLE-PLAY SESSION FIVE

Generalization “Everyone does it. Why not me?”

In this session Dr. Samenow used a participant’s interview to illustrate a tactic we often use to avoid change, generalization or convincing ourselves and others that everyone engages in a behavior so it’s okay for us to behave that way too. One way to avoid falling into using this tactic 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 use of this tactic.

Think of a situation in which you believed that your behavior was okay since everyone acts that way. Write about that below.

Now think of a healthier way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind that just because we can point to others who make the same mistakes we make, this does not make our actions okay. Write about that below.

Now 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: How do you explain your behavior?

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

Tactic:

GENERALIZATION — “Everyone Does It, Why Not Me?”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Describe a situation when you argued that your actions were not that bad compared to what others have done. What were the excuses you used?.

What was the most absurd excuse or comparison you have ever given to minimize your irresponsible behavior?

This tactic may have worked at first, but describe what happened in the long run.

What could you have done that would have been more honest and less harmful for yourself and others

STAFF WORKSHEET for SESSION FIVE

Tactic:

GENERALIZATION — “Everyone Does It, Why Not Me?”

At one time or another, nearly all of us have been skillfully manipulated — or at least distracted by this Tactic.

Maybe you’re discussing a client’s inappropriate behavior. He becomes defensive; the next thing you know, he’s talking about *other* people’s misdeeds: fellow offenders, the corrupt legal system, dishonest judges or “mistakes” *you’ve* made. He’s describing a world in which lots of people do wrong, but *everyone else is getting away with it*.

If we focus on the merits of what the client is describing — and some of it could well be true — we’ve missed the point. The client has just done a magic act, making his own inappropriate behavior seem to disappear. What does “*Everyone does it,*” have to do with the *client’s* behavior? Nothing at all.

As we become more alert to this Tactic, we can be more effective; we can keep the focus on the client and his or her responsibility. We can use our judgment in deciding the direction and length of the discussion. Rather than allowing sleight-of-hand to make the truth disappear, we can shine a spotlight on it.

The questions and situations below provide an opportunity to consider ways to become more effective:

You have limited time. You see a client violating a minor rule; you are inclined to give a warning. You bring the infraction to his/her attention. How would you handle each of these responses?

A. The client says, “*I didn’t do it.*”

B. The client continues to argue. He says, “*Everybody does it. Why are you picking on me (or my group)?*”

Certified Facilitator – Samenow’s Tactics: Habits That Block Change

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Leading SESSION SIX

Tactic:

SILENCE — “I reveal nothing.”

View *Session Six* in DVD Part V.

Optional: Before viewing the DVD or at any time after, project the **overhead transparency** for this session or write the information from the transparency on a board or flipchart as an alternate guide for discussion and to provoke thought.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify the three basic purposes behind using the tactic of silence: to hide things about yourself, to control another person, and to use silence as a weapon to try to anger somebody.

GUIDELINES:

— Ask students about their observations regarding the tactic of silence.

- *What do we hope to accomplish when we use the tactic of silence?*
- *How was this tactic demonstrated in the DVD?*
- *How does this tactic prevent someone from making responsible changes?*
- *What are the three basic purposes for using the tactic of silence?* (Intended to deepen the answers to the first question.)

— As time allows, pass out the worksheet for this session and discuss the Reading for Session Five. The work can be given as a homework assignment and discussed at a later time.

1/2 to 1 hour session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Explore more deeply a common motivation for the tactic of silence: control over others.

GUIDELINES:

— After discussing the questions listed above, have participants

complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

— If time allows, have participants discuss their answers to each worksheet question. End this session by asking the students to discuss how their use of this tactic has affected other people in their lives.

READING for SESSION SIX

Tactic:

SILENCE — “I reveal nothing.”

Have you ever been on the receiving end of the silent treatment? You want to talk. Or to argue — you have things to say. And the other person won’t talk. End of discussion. How does it feel?

Have you ever been on the *giving* end of the silent treatment — when you just refused to talk? Some people say they feel powerful when they do that; the other person feels frustrated and angry.

Silence is putting out this message: *“I’m not listening to you. I’m not interested.”*

Why do we use silence in that way? Here are some reasons:

- ...to avoid talking with someone we don’t trust.
- ...to keep others from knowing who we are and what we’re about.
- ...to avoid being confronted or taking responsibility for our actions.
- ...to make ourselves feel powerful and try to control the other person:
“I win; you lose.”

Sometimes silence is a way to stay safe. But when we’re talking with someone who could help us change, it shuts them out. Silence builds a wall — and we’re likely to stay stuck in our old ways.

This habit prevents us from being open to criticism, and from getting help we could use. Is it smart to keep using silence?

If you have used this tactic, are you willing to give it up? Are you willing to be more open? Only you can decide.

ROLE-PLAY SESSION 6

Silence “I reveal nothing.”

In this session Dr. Samenow used a participant’s interview to illustrate a tactic we often use to avoid change, silence or the idea that we will not be vulnerable if we don’t reveal anything to others. One way to avoid falling into the use of this tactic 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 the use of this tactic.

Think of a situation in which when you were confronted, you remained silent. Write about that below.

Now think of a healthier way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind that silence prevents us from accepting our behaviors and making better choices for the future. Write about that below.

Now 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: Why did you do that?

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 SIX

Tactic:

SILENCE — “I reveal nothing.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Describe a situation when you used silence to control or intimidate someone.

Silence may work at times, in the short run. Describe a time when using this tactic didn’t work.

What are some of the long-term effects of using this tactic?

What could you do to stop yourself from using this tactic?

STAFF WORKSHEET for SESSION SIX

Tactic:

SILENCE — “I reveal nothing.”

(If necessary, use an additional page)

You’ve probably seen this tactic often: a client remains silent, in an attempt to control the situation. Think back on some of your confrontations. How often is the silent treatment their tactic of choice?

What message were they trying to convey — “I don’t care;” “I’m not listening;” “I won’t give you the time of day;”? An offender in the DVD said, *“I try to make them feel this small — to get up under them.”* At times, they might make headway in accomplishing this goal.

Just as we remind our clients that they are responsible for how they feel and how they react to a situation, we know this also applies to us. We might become frustrated at times and have difficulty dealing with this tactic. We might need to remind ourselves to not take the client’s behavior personally.

To confront this tactic, some professionals have had success with putting things down on paper. For example, if a client refuses to talk with us about a situation, we can inform them of their options. If they continue in their silence, we can show them their options in writing. They can sign the form agreeing to comply. If they refuse to sign the form, we document their refusal to comply.

Other confrontations can be less formal. If we make a statement and the client refuses to acknowledge, we might simply state, *“Mr. Jones I take your silence as agreement. Thank you for agreeing with me.”* Sometimes that will elicit a response. Choose a method that fits for you, the person and the situation.

What are some other ways you could respond to silence?

List some of the reasons we need to be objective (avoid taking it personally) when confronting clients. What might be some benefits?

Leading SESSION SEVEN

Thoughts trigger Actions. Errors in thinking trigger Tactics.

Show ***Session Seven*** in **DVD Part VI**. There are three “Optional Pauses” in Session Seven. They correspond to the three statements under “Guidelines” below. As time allows, you may wish to stop at each “Optional Pause” and discuss each statement.

Optional: Before viewing the DVD or at any time after, project the **overhead transparency** for this session or write the information from the transparency on a board or flipchart as an alternate guide for discussion and to provoke thought.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify how the *tactics* we use are triggered by *errors in thinking*.

GUIDELINES:

— Ask students to give examples of the possible tactics a person might use as a result of these *errors in thinking*:

1. “*I’m angry so it’s OK to quit.*” (Tactics include: ignoring, lying.)
2. “*I don’t feel safe, I’ll shut down.*” (Tactics include: silence, becoming defensive, shutting down, tuning out.)
3. “*They’re all the same; I won’t deal with any of them.*” (Tactics include: accusing others of misunderstanding, verbal attack, vagueness, diversion.)

— As time allows, pass out the worksheet for this session, and discuss the Reading for Session Seven. The work can be given as a homework assignment and discussed at a later time.

1/2 to 1 hour session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: It is unrealistic to believe we can change our *behavior* if we continue with the same *thinking*.

GUIDELINES:

- participants — After discussing the questions listed above, have
session. complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this
- each worksheet — If time allows, have participants discuss their answers to
question. End this session by asking participants to discuss how their use of
this tactic has affected other people in their lives.

READING for SESSION SEVEN

Thoughts trigger Actions

Errors In Thinking trigger Tactics

What is the story of your life? It is all the actions you’ve ever taken, day by day, moment by moment. And how do actions begin? As thoughts in the mind.

What keeps us stuck in destructive actions? Destructive thoughts. Tactics that keep us stuck begin as *errors in thinking*.

Here are some examples of errors in thinking — and the tactics they might lead to:

Thinking: “*To hell with it...*” when we’re under stress.

Resulting Tactics: We stop paying attention, or become silent. Or we say “Yes,” when we have no intention of following through.

Thinking: “*I’m angry, so it’s OK to give up.*”

Resulting Tactics: We refuse to face the problem and become silent. Or we blame or attack others.

Thinking: “*I don’t feel safe; I’ll shut down.*”

Resulting Tactics: We use silence or become vague or change the subject (*diversion*).

Thinking: “*They’re all the same.*” (people in authority).

Resulting Tactics: We judge people before we know them. We build ourselves up by putting others down. Or we have a low opinion of them,

feeding them what we think they want to hear. Or we generalize to a point of absurdity: “*They do wrong things; why can’t I?*”

People who want to change their lives have to begin where it all starts: the *thoughts* in their minds. A key step for change is to become *aware* of thoughts that lead to trouble.

ROLE-PLAY SESSION SEVEN

Errors in Thinking Trigger Tactics

In this session participants discussed the many thoughts we have which trigger our use of tactics:

1. I’m angry so it’s okay to quit.
2. I won’t face the problem.
3. I don’t feel safe. I’ll shut down.
4. They’re all the same.
5. I won’t deal with any of them.

One way to avoid using tactics 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 had one of the thoughts above then used a tactic because of the thought. Write about that below.

Now think of a healthier 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.

Now 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 “you” has been provided to get you started.

You: The heck with it.

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 SEVEN

Thoughts trigger Actions

Errors In Thinking trigger Tactics

List some of the tactics you have used. Then write the thought or “*error in thinking,*” that came first — that led you to use that tactic:

Tactic:

Error in Thinking:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

List some harmful habits you have developed. With each, write which ones are still active, and which ones could become active again.

To put an end to the habits above, what *errors in thinking* and *tactics* will you need to eliminate?

Certified Facilitator – Samenow’s Tactics: Habits That Block Change

(If necessary, use an additional page)

STAFF WORKSHEET for SESSION SEVEN

Thoughts trigger Actions

Errors In Thinking trigger *Tactics*

As agents of change, we need to remember that we are fighting a battle on two fronts: helping our clients address their thinking *and* their behavior. How many times have we heard someone say, “*I wasn’t thinking, I just did it,*” or “*I couldn’t stop myself...*” We might even find ourselves doing something similar at times: we plan to run an errand after work, but drive home out of habit; we find ourselves pulling into the driveway, wondering why we forgot about the errand.

Our habits are a very powerful influence in our daily lives. Almost everything we do eventually becomes a habit of one form or another. If our habits are healthy and responsible, we benefit greatly. If our habits are unhealthy and irresponsible, they can be very costly. Our clients often believe these habits are automatic, instinctive or sub-conscious compulsions which are outside of their control. It is essential to empower our clients with the knowledge that we *do* have a choice. Although change is difficult and requires sustained motivation and effort, it is possible to unlearn old habits and learn new ones.

List some common cognitive skills we take for granted, but our clients might find difficult to develop (such as balancing a check book or finding receipts for income tax):

Which *errors in thinking* or *tactics* might prevent them from doing the tasks you listed above?

(If necessary, use an additional page)

Leading SESSION EIGHT

BREAKING THE BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Overcoming Our Fears Of Change

Show ***Session Eight*** in **DVD Part VI**. There are five “Optional Pauses” in Session Eight that correspond to the five statements under “Guidelines” below. As time allows, you may wish to stop at each “Optional Pause” for discussion.

Optional: Questions and statements on the **overhead transparencies** can be used at any time as an alternate guide for the session, or to provoke additional discussion.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify how fears of change can prevent us from making responsible improvement in our lives.

GUIDELINES:

— Ask students to give examples of the possible fears people might have when considering change in their lives.

1. *Why would a lack of marketable work skills be a source of fear for someone who wants to change?*
2. *Why is the fear of failure difficult to face?*
3. *How can we responsibly deal with our fears of the unknown?*
4. *How can we responsibly deal with our fears of not being adequate?*
5. *How can we responsibly deal with our fears of giving up?*

— As time allows, pass out the worksheet for this session, and discuss the Reading for Session Eight. The work can be given as a homework assignment and discussed at a later time.

1/2 to 1 hour session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Realize that if we *deny* these fears, we give them even more control over our lives. We have to recognize our fears and deal with them.

GUIDELINES:

— After discussing the questions listed above, have the participants

complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

— If time allows, have participants discuss their answers to each worksheet question. End this session by asking how the use of this tactic has affected other people in their lives.

READING for SESSION EIGHT

BREAKING THE BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Overcoming Our Fears Of Change

The thought of changing our lives completely can be frightening. Why? Consider some of the following issues:

Our fear of leaving an institution without work and living skills

If we spend most of our lives chasing after easy solutions, learning to live responsibly will be hard.

Our fear of trying to change and then failing

Most people leaving an institution have conditions of release. Many have tried to comply with these conditions, but have failed. We look around and see people who spend most of their lives going in and out of institutions.

Our fear of being vulnerable

We have taken some pride in being survivors. We believe that we can always get what we need, regardless of who we have to take it from. If we stop using our survivor tactics, are others going to take advantage of us? Will we become like our victims?

Our fear of the unknown

If we make major changes in our lives, what kind of person will we become? Will we be able to handle painful situations that arise? Will we be able to live up to others' expectations? Will we be able to earn back the trust of others? Will we like and feel comfortable with the person we have become?

Our fear of giving up

After trying hard to change, will we be discouraged and quit? Will we fall back into our old attitudes of self pity? "*Why try?... Who cares?... Who am I kidding?... I can't do this...*" Will our old cravings return and take control of our lives again? Will we be like the people we despise?

Fear is a powerful force that can hold us back in some situations — but it can *help us* in others. My fear of failure (going back to prison) can motivate me to not commit another crime. If we listen to those fears they can stop us from doing wrong. But our personal fears can also be a wall — a wall we *feel* unable to climb. It's tempting to use our fears as an excuse for not changing. Yet, **if we deny these fears, we give them even more control** over our lives.

Change is possible if we face our fears...if we recognize, accept and deal with our fears. We can do this through hard work, refusing to give up, and

accepting the help of others. For some, it will not be one day at a time, it will be one moment at a time.

ROLE-PLAY SESSION EIGHT

Overcoming Fear of Change

In this session participants discussed the fears we have which trigger our use of tactics:

1. I have no skills to survive outside the institution.
2. I might fail.
3. My future is unknown.
4. I’m not good enough.
5. It’s easier to give up.

One way to avoid using tactics is to practice thinking and reacting differently to situations and people in our lives.

Dr. Samenow points out we only have three choices in life:

1. Go back to the life we have.
2. Decide not to live.
3. Decide to change.

He also points out that changing is not easy. Try brushing your teeth with your non-dominant hand for a week so you have a feeling of how uncomfortable change can be. Then remember why change is important in your life. 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 use of tactics.

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

Now think of a healthier way to think about and react to the situation. Keep in mind that, as Dr. Samenow points out, the best way to get through fear is just to make the change. Write about that below.

Now 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 “you” has been provided to get you started.

You: I’m afraid but...

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 EIGHT

BREAKING THE BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Overcoming Our Fears Of Change

(If necessary, use an additional page)

For each of the fears listed below, answer these questions:

1. When should I listen to this fear; when should I not listen?
2. How has it been in the way and prevented me from changing?
3. What can I do to better accept and deal with this fear?

Our fear of leaving an institution without career and living skills

Our fear of trying to change and then failing

Our fear of the unknown

Our fear of being vulnerable

STAFF WORKSHEET for SESSION EIGHT

BREAKING THE BARRIER TO CHANGE

Overcoming Our Fears Of Change

(If necessary, use an additional page)

We know from personal experience how difficult it is to deal with fear. If we have attained some level of maturity, these fears are often more manageable. The less maturity we have, the harder it is for us to manage these fears. Many of the people we work with believe these fears are insurmountable.

How do we help clients address their fears? As with any process of change, it must begin with honesty. Talking honestly with others about our fears can help us to become more aware of them. And it can open our minds to the input of others. This feedback can help us to put our fears into a more realistic perspective.

Some fears are healthy, and some are not. To be afraid of committing a crime because you fear the consequences is healthy. To be afraid of talking to someone you are attracted to is not. One way to help someone see this difference is to discuss the “worst-case scenario.” Ask, “If you listen to this fear, what’s the worst thing that could happen?” And ask, “If you set aside this fear, what’s the worst thing that could happen?”

Example: A man is on parole, and someone invites him to join in on a burglary. He fears getting caught, violating parole, and being sent to prison on a new case. If he listens to this fear, what’s the worst thing that could happen? He might say “no thanks” to the burglary, and miss out on getting the illegal money. If he ignores this fear, what’s the worst thing that could happen? He commits the crime, gets caught, and causes extreme consequences for himself and others. To prevent this from happening, this person needs to *listen* to his fear.

Example: A woman needs a job, but fears that she will be turned down. The worst-case scenario: she might feel embarrassed or humiliated. This person needs to go for the opportunity and *not* listen to her fear.

List some worst-case scenarios for a client who is getting out on parole for the first time. He has expressed his fear of failing due to a lack of job skills.

Which of the worst-case scenarios you listed could he prevent if he *listens* to his fears? Which of these could he prevent if he *sets aside* his fears?

Leading SESSION NINE

HOW CAN WE STOP USING THESE TACTICS?

Three Essential Steps For Change

Continue showing DVD Part VI — from the start of *Session Nine* to the end of the DVD — or stop at “*Why Change?*” and view the summary later.

Optional: Project the **overhead transparency** for this session or write the information from the transparency on a board or flipchart as an alternate guide for discussion and to provoke thought.

15 to 30 minute session

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify *three essential steps* for people who want to stop using irresponsible tactics.

GUIDELINES:

— Ask participants how each one of these steps could help someone *stop* using tactics:

Step One: Catch yourself *after* — “*I just used a tactic.*”

Step Two: Catch yourself *before* you use a tactic.

Step Three: Catch the *error in thinking*.

Note: Each step might be practiced over a period of days or weeks before moving on to the next step.

— As time allows, pass out the worksheet for this session and discuss the Reading for Session Nine. The work can be given as a homework assignment and discussed at a later time.

1/2 to 1 hour session:

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Realize that *change is possible* — if we choose to practice these three steps consistently.

GUIDELINES:

— After discussing the questions listed above, have the participants complete the reading assignment and worksheet for this session.

— If time allows, have participants discuss their answers to each worksheet question. End this session by asking participants to discuss

how their lives might change if they were to stop using irresponsible tactics.

What effect would it have on your family and others close to you? How would it change your daily experience? How would it affect the course of your life in the long run?

READING for SESSION NINE

*How Can We **STOP** Using These Tactics?*

3 Steps For Change

This DVD series shows how our *thoughts* lead to our *actions*. Destructive *thinking* leads to destructive *tactics*. And tactics keep us stuck.

How can we stop using tactics? If we want to change, we must *notice* the tactics we use. We must “catch ourselves” using them — and day by day, replace them with new habits. And, as we work to change, we have to look at our *fears* of change and learn how to deal with these feelings. Otherwise, they might continue to keep us stuck.

here do we start? What do we need to remember? How hard do we have to work to make these changes possible?

Step One: Catch Yourself — “*I just used a tactic.*” For example, we accuse someone of misunderstanding, in order to divert their attention. If we really want to change, we have to recognize what just happened. We need to *notice* when we use tactics.

The moment that happens we have a decision to make: “*Do I let it slide or do I admit to it?*” If we are sincere about change, we need to take responsibility for what we did. That means stopping ourselves and responding with honesty:

“*I’m sorry; I was feeling uncomfortable and I tried to change the subject.*” It is very important to do this each time we find ourselves lapsing back into these old habits.

Step Two: Catch Yourself *Before* You Use a Tactic. With practice, we will become skilled at recognizing these tactics. Then we stop ourselves *before* we use them. We may be thinking, “*I don’t like what this guy is asking me.*” We can be honest and tell the person how we feel, in a way that keeps communication open.

Our honesty needs to be balanced with respect for others — and for ourselves. We have to decide how much we can trust that person... how much information that person needs to know. The more we trust a person, the more honest we can be.

Step Three: Catch The *Error In Thinking*. With practice, we will be able to catch the *thought* that would otherwise lead us to use a tactic. Someone

honestly disagrees with us and we find ourselves thinking, “*This guy’s just trying to put me down.*” We can catch this error — and recognize that it grows out of our fear of being put down, our fear of being humiliated. We can choose to *not* react. *We can change the way we see this situation* and accept that he has a right to disagree with us, and that we can actually look stronger in the eyes of others if we acknowledge that.

ROLE-PLAY SESSION NINE

Steps for Change

In this session Dr.Samenow discussed the steps we take toward making changes in our lives:

1. Catch yourself after you used a tactic and acknowledge to yourself that you just used a tactic.
2. Catch yourself before you use a tactic and choose not to use the tactic.
3. Catch the error in thinking so you can change the thought which will change your behavior.

One way to avoid using tactics 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 and led you to using tactics discussed in the videos.

Think of a situation in which you were afraid of change then used a tactic because of the fear. Write about that below.

Now think of a healthier 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.

Now 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 “you” has been provided to get you started.

You: I was just thinking...

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 NINE
HOW DO WE STOP USING THESE TACTICS?

3 Steps For Change

You have just been in an argument with your spouse. You were not honest about the amount of money you spent. When confronted about this, you respond with some anger and say, “*Well, what happened to all that extra money you had last month?*” How could you apply “***Step one: Catch yourself after you’ve used a Tactic***” to this situation?

You are confronted by your boss at work. He asks if you are involved with those employees who have been taking supplies from the business. Your initial thought is, “*Why is he asking me? This guy is being unfair to me because. . .*” What tactics would you be *tempted* to use?

How could you apply “***Step two: Catch yourself before you use a Tactic***” to this situation?

How could you apply “*Step three: Catch yourself after you’ve used an error in thinking*” to this situation?

STAFF WORKSHEET for SESSION NINE

HOW CAN WE STOP USING THESE TACTICS?

3 Steps For Change

(If necessary, use an additional page)

If someone wants to master a skill, they have to *use* it — to practice it. As agents of change, we have the opportunity to do two things. First, we can teach our clients responsible living skills. We do this through discussions, DVDs, worksheets, reading assignments and personal journal writing. Our second task is to provide opportunities for our clients to *practice* the skills they’re learning. We do this based on our situation and the options available to us.

We all work in different environments. If we are teachers, no two classes are alike. If we are counselors, we use different therapeutic tools for different clients. If we are line staff in an institution, every assignment and every area presents unique challenges. What we share in common is the belief that *personal change is possible*.

How, then, can we assist our clients in addressing these errors and tactics? Each of us must find methods and styles which fit our unique situation. These must include opportunities for clients to *practice* responsible living skills.

List the different ways you are — or will be — *teaching* your clients about errors in thinking and tactics that block change.

List the ways you are — or will be — providing opportunities for them to *practice* these skills.

What are some changes or improvements you could make to benefit everyone involved in your area?

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Appendix A: Certified Facilitator – Samenow's Tactics: Habits That Block Change

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. Tactics are behaviors used to
 - a. hide from others or cover up behavior
 - b. prevent people from communicating
 - c. block change
 - d. none of the above
 - e. all of the above
2. Habits that block change are called addictions.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. "You're the problem, not me" is an example of:
 - a. resistance
 - b. diversion
 - c. attack
 - d. projection
4. Diversion is not productive because of all the following EXCEPT:
 - a. it is a way of lying to ourselves
 - b. it is a way of diffusing a confrontational situation
 - c. it controls and manipulates people
 - d. it avoids looking at our need to change
5. The tactic of minimization makes it is more difficult to justify illegal behavior.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. When I drink I get in trouble and then I say, well I don't get in trouble all the time so I continue drinking," is an example of the tactic of
 - a. defensiveness
 - b. minimization
 - c. diversion
 - d. denial
7. An attempt to pacify a person in authority by saying what you think they want to hear is:
 - a. diversion
 - b. casing them out
 - c. conning
 - d. agreement

8. What is the difference between your little two-dollar skit [theft] and my two thousand dollar skit?” is an example of:
 - a. minimization
 - b. defensiveness
 - c. generalization
 - d. diversion
9. Saying to ourselves “Everyone does it, why not me?” is using the tactic of generalization.
 - a. True
 - b. False
10. The purposes of the tactic of silence include all EXCEPT:
 - a. to control another person
 - b. to stall for time
 - c. to “get to” someone
 - d. so that you don’t reveal anything about yourself that you don’t want to reveal
11. Dr. Samenow tells the group there are only three possible alternatives:
 - a. go back to prison, get a job, change your thinking
 - b. die of a drug overdose, go back to crime, get clean and sober
 - c. go back to drugs and crime, suicide, change
 - d. go back to drugs and crime, go back to prison, get a job
12. A tactic is an expression of an error in thinking.
 - a. True
 - b. False
13. The first step in stopping the use of “tactics” is to recognize it before it happens.
 - a. True
 - b. False
14. Changing errors in thinking requires
 - a. concentration
 - b. effort
 - c. patience
 - d. time
 - e. all of the above
15. “Errors in thinking” includes all the following self-talk **except**:
 - a. I won’t face the problem
 - b. I can get away with this
 - c. I’ll shut down
 - d. I don’t feel safe

16. The fact that there are “crooked” people in all professions makes it easier to:
 - a. avoid accountability and responsibility
 - b. justify ones behavior
 - c. avoid “looking in the mirror”
 - d. avoid change
 - e. all of the above
17. Changing thinking patterns involves a simple decision to do things differently.
 - a. True
 - b. False
18. Generalization involves small, logical steps to include related behaviors.
 - a. True
 - b. False
19. By using _____, it is easier to justify illegal behavior:
 - a. rationalization
 - b. minimization
 - c. generalization
 - d. a and b
 - e. b and c
20. An example of minimizing behavior used by an inmate was:
 - a. “They were only ‘technical violations’ “
 - b. “Everybody does it.”
 - c. “It was my first offense.”
 - d. “Haven’t you ever taken something?”
21. “The way to change your behavior every day is to stay aware of the way you’re thinking every day.”
 - a. True
 - b. False
22. A strong sense of power and control over the other person is most often associated with:
 - a. diversion
 - b. minimization
 - c. attack
 - d. silence
23. “You’re supposed to help me, I’m not supposed to help you,” “I think you’re being a little pushy on me,” and “You’re not understanding me are you?” are expressions of:
 - a. diversion
 - b. minimization
 - c. attack
 - d. defensiveness

24. Automatically attacking or shutting down is a “fight-or-flight” response.
- a. True
 - b. False
25. Destructive thoughts lead to _____ actions.
- a. positive
 - b. carefully thought out
 - c. beneficial
 - d. destructive
26. Ways of thinking that keep people stuck in bad decisions and actions are called _____.
- a. blockages
 - b. tactics
 - c. forces
 - d. over-reactions
27. All of the inmates were very positive after their one-on-one interview with Dr. Samenow.
- a. True
 - b. False
28. “I don’t like that question” is an example of a/an _____ tactic.
- a. positive
 - b. divisive
 - c. defensive
 - d. earnest
29. A tactic is a way to shift attention away from oneself.
- a. True
 - b. False
30. Changing the subject to avoid answering a question is known as a _____.
- a. focus
 - b. shift
 - c. ploy
 - d. diversion
31. Diversion allows one to avoid facing a situation or respond to a request.
- a. True
 - b. False

32. Diversion is all of the following except:
- a. changing the subject
 - b. answering the question
 - c. controlling others
 - d. lying to ourselves
33. Saying or thinking, "it's no big deal" is a form of _____.
a. projecting
b. involving
c. minimizing
d. denying
34. If I tell you what I think you want to hear in order to gain favor I am _____.
a. joking with you
b. being honest with you
c. trying to be your friend
d. casing you out
35. Generalization means to equate something you have done with the fact that everyone does it too.
a. True
b. False
36. Silence as a tactic can be used for all of the following except:
a. to not reveal anything
b. as a way to motivate another person
c. as a way to control another person
d. as a weapon to get at somebody
37. As a rule, silence would generally not hinder change.
a. True
b. False
38. A tactic is a/an _____ of an error in thinking.
a. beginning
b. unrelated issue
c. expression
d. simplification
39. Fear of _____ can be a thinking error.
a. disclosure
b. flying
c. heights
d. the dark

40. We must become _____ our thoughts in order to change.
- a. blind to
 - b. afraid of
 - c. proud of
 - d. aware of
41. Fear of the unknown is generally a good thing, it won't block change.
- a. True
 - b. False
42. Dr. Samenow says there are only three possible alternatives that exist, all except:
- a. going back to drugs/crime
 - b. committing suicide
 - c. maintaining the status quo
 - d. deciding to change
43. The first step to take in order to stop using tactics is to recognize it after it happens.
- a. True
 - b. False
44. The second step is to _____
- a. realize that your problem is solved
 - b. catch yourself before you use a tactic
 - c. deny that you uses tactics
 - d. merely go on about your business
45. The third step is to catch the error in thinking.
- a. True
 - b. False