

Strategies for Moving Forward

PART I: IN OUT GROUP SESSIONS WE LEARNED ABOUT.....

Identifying triggers and planning to avoid or alter trigger situations

- When struggling with withdrawal
- What having physical pain
- What having negative feelings
- When in social/positive situations

Mindfulness

- Increase awareness of bodily sensations associated with cravings.
- Think of your body as an early warning system.
- Don't react – instead relax and practice letting go of thoughts and sensations.

Disrupting habits

- Notice behaviours that have become habits
- Introduce small disruptions into these routines.
- Monitor and track strong habits.
- Implement strategies learned in session 4.

Altering responses to triggers by managing maladaptive thoughts

- Pay attention to maladaptive thoughts.
- Stop before acting on a thought.
- Think about the consequences.
- Do something else.
- Challenge or change the thought.

Managing cravings and urges

- Address the maladaptive thoughts.
- Delay and take a “time-out.”
- Remember success.
- Distract yourself by thinking of or doing something else.
- Substitute something else for a drink or the drug.
- Avoid or leave the situation.
- Call someone for support.

Acceptance

- Become aware of unpleasant physical sensations.
- Turn attention toward them.
- Practice mindfulness of breathing.
- Relax and remain open to experiencing sensations.

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Rewarding successes

- Acknowledging accomplishments.
- Rewarding steps toward maintaining change.

Assertiveness

- Describe the problem behaviour.
- Using "I" statements, describe your feelings or reactions.
- Ask specifically for what you want to see happen.

Effective refusals

- Pay attention to your own body language.
- Do not engage in reasons discussion, or argument.
- "No" is really enough.

Giving feedback

- Stay calm.
- Choose the right time/place.
- Correct understandings.
- Don't blame.
- Use "I" language.

Anxiety

- Instead of focusing only on the negative, generate ideas on what the positive might be.

Wellness

- Changing one area can lead to changes in other areas.
- Changing your eating habits can help repair the body from damage caused by substance use.
- Exercise can help release "feel good" chemicals in the body.

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PART II: TOOLS I HAVE LERND FROM AVOIDING SUBSTANCE USE

Ask participants to write a check mark in the blanks beside the tools.....

- Pay attention to triggers.
- Think of the possible consequences.
- Delay the decision.
- Change the situation.
- Speak assertively.
- Change activities.
- Pay attention to my thoughts.
- Remember the pros and cons
- Challenge or change the thought.
- Exercise can improve my mood.
- Vigilantly monitor strong habits.
- Avoid, alter, or leave.
- Call someone – ask for help.
- Use relaxation techniques.
- Reward successes.
- “No” is enough.
- Give feedback appropriately.
- Handle receiving feedback.
- Do substance-free activities.
- Relax and let go of thoughts and sensations.
- Distract my thoughts.
- Interrupt habits with small disruptions.
- Substitute a positive behaviour.
- Turn my attention to my breathing.