

THE MATRIX MODEL FOR  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SETTINGS

# B

## Adjustment Group Handouts

INTENSIVE ALCOHOL & DRUG  
TREATMENT PROGRAM

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Hazelden Publishing  
Center City, Minnesota 55012-0176

1-800-328-9000  
[hazelden.org/bookstore](http://hazelden.org/bookstore)

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Printed in the United States of  
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## Adjustment Group Handouts

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DATE  
COMPLETED

**Session 1: Anger Management**

Handout 1: Addressing Anger and Other Emotions in Recovery

**Session 2: Thinking Errors**

Handout 2: Thinking Errors

**Session 3: Confrontation and Authority**

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Handout 6: Values

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Handout 11: Interviewing for Employment

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*continued*

# B

## Adjustment Group Handouts

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DATE  
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**Session 13: Boundaries**

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## Addressing Anger and Other Emotions in Recovery

In the Adjustment phase, your thinking improves as recovery continues and your brain heals. There is usually renewed hope and raised expectations, but as a result there can also be frustration and disappointment. This is especially true in the area of employment.

In early recovery, offenders may have worked in minimum wage or low-paying jobs just to get by and satisfy court or probation/parole requirements. But as they begin to think more clearly and gain confidence, they may want something better. Still, there are often obstacles to finding that better job: most employers do a criminal background check, which could get in the way of a job offer.

Housing can also be a problem for similar reasons. These situations, and many others, can feel unfair and frustrating. *Haven't I already served my time?* the person might think. Things will get better as long as sobriety continues and emotions are managed in a positive way.

1. Have you been denied a job you wanted because of your criminal history?

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2. Describe your feelings and emotions when you were denied the job:

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3. Do you feel that you're still being punished for your past criminal and addictive behaviors, even though you've served your time? If so, how?

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4. Have there been times when you really tried to do the right thing, but your probation/parole officer, family members, or others thought you were returning to your old behaviors? Describe those situations:

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ADDRESSING ANGER AND OTHER EMOTIONS IN RECOVERY | *continued*

These frustrating situations are common for offenders trying to build a new life. Frustration often leads to anger. To support your recovery, you need to learn to manage anger appropriately as a sober person. This skill is one key to maintaining sobriety. Remember, anger is a normal emotion. It is how you *manage* it that is the key.

Use these tips for managing anger:

- Be aware of your triggers for anger, just as you're aware of triggers for your substance use and criminal behaviors. Write down the typical times when you get angry. Is there a pattern of people, situations, or events? List them here:

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- Take good care of yourself. Get enough sleep, eat healthy meals, and avoid the triggers you identify with your anger. How could you take better care of yourself?

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- Physical violence is never the answer—although it may have been part of your criminal behaviors in the past. If you ever feel you're heading in this direction, leave the situation. Have you had any experiences like this in recovery?

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- Regular exercise is a good way to let off steam in general. It can also help you deal nonviolently with a frustrating situation. Do you exercise regularly?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No      What do you do, or what could you do, for exercise?

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## Thinking Errors

Thinking errors are part of the underlying mental process that allows someone to commit crimes. To commit a crime, you have to think and behave in a way that runs counter to your culture's laws and values. What allows this to happen? Mistaken thoughts and beliefs.

Place a check mark next to the thinking errors you've made during your past criminal activities:

- I'm different from everybody else.
- I can do anything I want, and nobody can stop me.
- I tell lies because people let me.
- I depend on others to support my lifestyle.
- I really don't care about anything or anybody.
- I don't think I'm like other people.
- I can commit crimes because other people are stupid, and I can get away with it.
- I was brought up not having anything, so I deserve something in life.
- If someone leaves something out in plain view, they're asking for it to be stolen.
- I sold drugs to support my family and nothing more.
- I didn't force people to use drugs. I just sold them. They're the ones with the problem.
- Other:

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1. Do you believe any of the above thoughts and beliefs are wrong? Why or why not?

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THINKING ERRORS | *continued*

2. Now that you've identified some of your past thinking errors, let's look at how those thinking patterns were formed.

a. Often our values are shaped by people around us. Do you think your values were influenced by your family or others around you?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No    Explain:

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b. Do you have family members who are involved in criminal activity, or have been in the past?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No    Explain:

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3. What will you do to change your thinking so you can stop criminal activity?

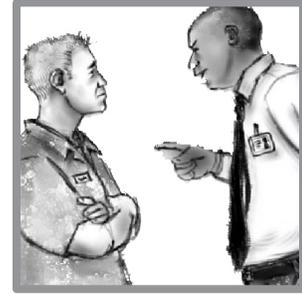
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## Managing Confrontation and Authority

Recovering offenders often have trouble with authority figures or with someone telling them what to do. Learning to deal with authority will be a key to continued success in maintaining a prosocial lifestyle.

### Past Problems

1. In a justice-related setting, have you ever made a problem worse by reacting inappropriately to an authority figure such as a probation or parole officer, judge, policeman, or treatment therapist?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If yes, what issue caused you to react inappropriately?

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2. What could you have done differently?

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3. Have you ever felt that you were being wrongly accused by someone in authority and reacted inappropriately?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If yes, what were the circumstances?

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MANAGING CONFRONTATION AND AUTHORITY | *continued*

4. What specific things about authority figures bother you?

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**New Ways**

These are some possible ways to manage your reactions and responses to authority figures. Check those below that you think you've tried, or might want to try:

- Remember, people in authority are doing their jobs. Has your behavior possibly provoked a response from them? Try seeing things from their perspective.
- Stay calm. Remember, your inappropriate reactions will have big consequences.
- Think before you speak. Counting or using thought-stopping skills can give you a few minutes to gather your thoughts.
- Deep breathing will help you relax. Take ten deep breaths.
- Stay focused on your business to help avoid additional problems.
- Listen calmly to criticism to see what you might learn from it. Criticism from an authority figure often gives you helpful information—you don't have to see it as harmful. Try hearing the person out without reacting.

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## The Courage to Change the Things I Can

Many recovering offenders believe they can't change. Other people may have told them that, too: friends, family, and people in the criminal justice system, for example. After you repeatedly hear this, you may begin to believe it, too. If you think you can't change, then you likely won't be able to make changes, or even try.

Don't believe everything you hear. You can change if you decide to try. Make an effort. If you don't like your situation, you can do something about it. To make change happen, you first have to identify the problems, then determine what you can and cannot control.

1. What is going on in your life right now that you would like to change?

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2. What do you think is stopping you from making the changes?

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THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN | *continued*

Offenders in recovery are often overwhelmed with requirements from court, probation/parole, other social services, treatment, and employment. It helps to just take one small step that is manageable, then move to another small step. Soon you've climbed the stairs and overcome many obstacles just by taking the small steps.

List two things you can do something about right now:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Now that you've identified things you feel you can change, what steps could you take to make these changes?

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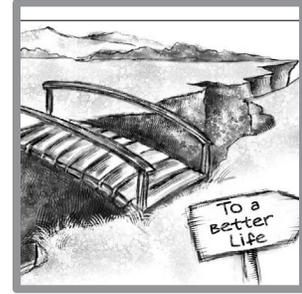
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There are also many resources to help you make these changes. Talk to people in your support systems, such as your case manager, therapist, and probation/parole officer: tell them what you're planning to change, and ask for a list of community resources. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

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## Road Map for a Life Plan

A life plan is like a road map. A life plan can span years; it's made up of large blocks of time. For instance, if your plan is to go to school so you can get a better job, the plan might stretch

out over the years it would take to earn a certificate, license, or degree

Where do you want to be in six months? What steps will you take to get there?

**Goal #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you want to be in six years? What steps will you take to get there?

**Goal #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_

ROAD MAP FOR A LIFE PLAN | *continued*

The approaches listed below may help you achieve your goals. Check those that sound useful to you.

- I will develop a journal and write down my plans and dreams.
- I will read material that is informative and that will help with my life plans.
- I will attend my treatment and other required sessions.
- I will attend recovery support meetings and use my support systems.
- I will read and learn about the things I want to accomplish.
- I will find people and resources that can help me accomplish my plans.
- I will treat others the way I want to be treated.
- I will comply with directions given to me by someone who has authority over me.
- I will be courteous in my manner and my conduct.

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## Values

Every person has a set of values. In fact, people's habits often reflect their true values—the things that are important to them, whether they're prosocial values or not.

As offenders, we've likely developed some antisocial values and habits. Maybe we picked these up through antisocial friends or peers, family members, or even through our involvement with the criminal justice system. Below is a list of common antisocial values. Place a check by the ones that have applied to you now or in the past:

- Disrespect
- Non-accountability
- Lack of compassion
- Disregard for rules

Of your family, antisocial friends, or others, who do you think has contributed the most to your antisocial values?

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How do you think they influenced your antisocial values?

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VALUES | *continued*

How do you think your environment (home, neighborhood) impacted your antisocial values?

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How do you think your values have changed during your treatment?

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What do you think has influenced this change?

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## How My Attitudes Impact My Behavior

Values impact behavior, and so do attitudes. Attitudes are consistent ways we think and feel about something. Our attitudes influence what we do, who we are, and how others see us.

**Below is a list of attitudes related to authority and rules. Which ones have you had, either now or in the past? Check all that apply.**

- Other people are no better than me.
- I am smarter than the system.
- I can get away with anything because I'm not like other people.
- Drugs help me; I don't see the problem.
- Using pot is OK; everyone in my family uses pot.
- Drinking and driving is OK as long as you don't get caught.
- I take things because I deserve them.
- What other people think is not important.
- If I do what I need to do, I can serve my time and probation/parole and move on with my life.
- I can learn from my mistakes.
- I can be a stronger person from my past experiences in the system.

How do you think your attitudes have changed while in treatment?

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Who do you think influenced these changes in your attitudes?

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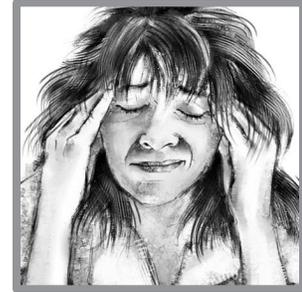
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What has happened to change some of your attitudes?

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## I Am So Overwhelmed!

During the Adjustment phase, many recovering offenders feel overwhelmed. You'll soon be discharged from treatment. You may have a new sense of accountability, and you're looking ahead to changes in your family and job situation.

What things are concerning you right now? Make a list:

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How do you plan to manage these things, and in what order?

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What resources (including people) do you plan to use to help you address these concerns?

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Don't forget: you've learned a lot and gained many new skills. Make sure you use what you've learned! Deal with issues by taking small steps. That reduces stress and makes things feel more manageable.

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## Getting a Job

Recovering offenders in the Adjustment stage often realize they want more from employment. In the past, many have made easy money through criminal activity. After release from jail or prison, or in early drug court, offenders often take minimum wage or low-paying jobs just to get by and satisfy the justice system. But as you've improved in recovery, you may have begun to want more from employment. You might want more than a routine job. You might want a career—a job in a field that requires some special skills and offers growth on a career path.

Do you feel like you now want a career? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Having a career is a chance to show your self-reliance and learn new things. It can also give you pride in your accomplishments. A career is a combination of your education, training, talents, past jobs, and is also related to what you want to achieve. It may take time to decide on a career, plan for it, and make the effort—but the rewards will be worth it.

If you answered yes to the question above, what type of career do you think matches your interests, personality, and skills?

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What training or education do you think you'll need to achieve your career goals?

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GETTING A JOB | *continued*

What do you think will be some challenges in starting your career?

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Just as you've had support in creating your recovery and prosocial life, you may need support to help you begin your career.

Do you have prosocial friends or supportive people who could serve as mentor(s) for you? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, who are these people?

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If you don't have supportive people and resources right now, you may need to look for them. For example, employment and vocational agencies can help you evaluate your strengths and abilities. But before you visit one of these agencies, think carefully about this question yourself:

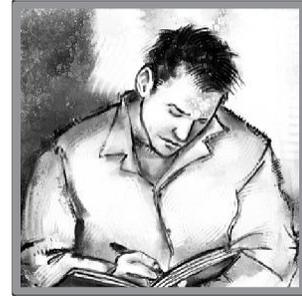
What are some specific strengths and abilities you have that are related to your career goal?

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Remember, you may have some challenges due to your past criminal record. But you can find a career—even with a record. Keep positive and stay focused on your goal!



## Your Resume

Anyone looking for a job needs a resume to present his or her strengths, abilities, and experiences. When building a resume, it is important to be truthful. If your resume isn't truthful, it will come back to cause you problems later.

### *Some resume tips:*

- Include an accurate statement of your skills and abilities.
- Build the resume to highlight any skills that relate to the specific job being sought.
- Make it professional-looking. Use nice paper and printing. Neatness counts.
- Look for errors in content, dates, spelling, and grammar.
- List your previous jobs and accomplishments, cite your promotions and positive reviews, and mention any recognitions you have received.
- List any education, skills training, or graduation from high school or GED, technical school, or college.
- If you've done any volunteer activities, list them to highlight your community involvement.
- If you were in the military, list that information too.

You also need a cover letter that introduces you to the employer. In the letter, briefly state why you think you can be an asset to this employer. Mention your qualifications, too. Personally sign your cover letter.

Given the above information, what are your concerns about writing a resume?

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What resources and supports could help you write a resume?

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YOUR RESUME | *continued*

Use the format of this sample resume to write your own.

## John Smith Doe

**Address:** Show your complete mailing address.

**Phone:** Use a number where an employer can reach you easily.

**Email:** If you don't have an email address, list a friend who'll share an email account with you.

### Objective:

*Make a positive statement about what you want in your employment. For example: To obtain a challenging position that allows me to utilize my current skills to assist in advancing a business that offers a stable employment opportunity. I am also eager to learn new skills and business and technological advancements. Detail oriented, self-motivated, with a strong work ethic.*

### Employment History:

*Remember, the purpose of your resume is to get a job interview. It's not the place to confess your sins and weaknesses or lie about yourself, either. Be truthful and don't use negative statements. If you have gaps in your resume due to short-term incarceration, list your jobs using years and months, not days. (If you volunteered or did community service while incarcerated, list it under volunteer work history.) Add a bullet point for each job. Use this format: Time span, job title, company name, city, state, main job duties. Keep it brief! Sometimes the more you say, the more red flags it raises. Here are some good examples:*

- **Oct. 2013 – Feb. 2014:** Not available for work for personal reasons but utilized the time to build additional skills. *(This is an example of a statement that can be used during an incarceration period.)*
- **Jan. 2011 – Aug. 2013:** Warehouse Assistant at Acme Warehouse, City, State.  
Main duties: Taking delivery of goods and supplies • Storing goods • Moving stock using a forklift truck • Picking and packing orders • Loading goods for dispatch • Keeping records of stock • Driving delivery vehicles.
- **June 2009 – Dec. 2010:** Factory Assembly Team Leader, Company, City, State.  
Main duties: Supervised an assembly line • Utilized skills to repair assembly line • Used a forklift to move materials • Never had an accident during my employment and was given commendation for an accident-free work environment.

### Volunteer Work History:

*Use volunteer work in church or community service to show your skills and add to your credibility. For example: Various placements mainly in voluntary and charitable organizations including administrative duties for a church charity, helping to run a food bank, helped in cleaning up local community parks, and assisted with the collection of data for a state project.*

### Additional Information:

- I am a qualified forklift truck operator.
- I have a current first-aid certificate.

### Activities:

Enjoy singing in my church choir and volunteer six hours per week in my church and community.

### References Available Upon Request.



## Interviewing for Employment

After you submit your resume, you may be called for an interview—so be ready to present yourself. You already know you’ll have some challenges due to your criminal past. Just be honest about that, and do whatever you can to be at your best.

Plan ahead to make sure you are dressed appropriately. If you don’t have appropriate clothing, there are many agencies that will donate clothes for an interview. Ask for help in finding those resources.

### **Don’t let fear of rejection keep you from striving for your career goals.**

Everyone who applies for a job will experience some rejection. For some jobs, hundreds of resumes may be submitted, and only a few people are interviewed. Rejection is part of the process. Don’t give up!

**Be honest.** During the interview, you may be asked about time gaps in your resume. Just be honest and let the interviewer know you made some bad decisions in the past, but you’re now making a new life, which includes being the best employee you can possibly be. Lying on an application may terminate you from the process or, if it’s discovered later, would likely dismiss you from the job.

### **Follow these interview tips:**

- Be polite.
- Be on time.
- Believe you can do it.
- Be positive.
- Be honest.
- Show your skills.

Now think about some of the job-seeking challenges for recovering ex-offenders.

These include:

- A criminal record
- No work history due to incarceration
- Employer bias against past offenders
- Not enough training or skills
- The job seeker’s attitude (e.g., defeatist or “chip on the shoulder”)
- Transportation problems

INTERVIEWING FOR EMPLOYMENT | *continued*

These issues don't mean you can't get a job. They are simply challenges that have to be solved as part of the process. Which of the above challenges most apply to you?

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Are there any challenges that were not listed above? If so, what are they?

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Your criminal history may seem like a huge mountain to climb. It will be challenging, but you can do it. Stay positive, focus on your goals, look for opportunities to improve your skills, and look for a way to volunteer if you find something that you like.

Sometimes volunteers get full-time jobs.

### **Interview Do's and Don'ts**

*Do:*

- Do bring a pen.
- Do arrive early to show you are organized, prepared, and dependable.
- Do greet everyone, including the receptionist, in a courteous, friendly way.
- Do smile and show a positive attitude; be enthusiastic.
- Do greet the interviewer by his or her full name (not first name!).
- Do look the interviewer in the eye.
- Do offer a firm handshake and introduce yourself.
- Do wait for the interviewer to ask you to be seated.
- Do speak clearly and loudly enough to be easily heard.
- Do relax if you can; remember the interviewer may be nervous, too.
- Do sit still.
- Do thank interviewers for their time. Smile and shake hands after the interview.
- Do leave in a positive manner.
- Do send a thank-you note recapping your interest in the job.

INTERVIEWING FOR EMPLOYMENT | *continued*

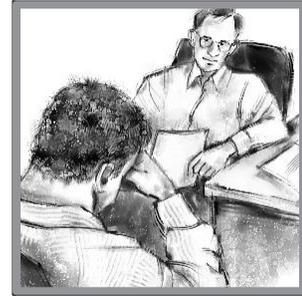
*Don't:*

- Don't chew gum or smoke; even if the interviewer does.
- Don't put anything on the interviewer's desk (elbows, purse, notebooks, etc.).
- Don't play nervously with your keys, rings, or pens.
- Don't slouch or look tired.
- Don't mumble or speak too softly.
- Don't avoid looking the interviewer in the eyes.
- Try not to look too scared or nervous.
- Don't argue or act defensive or secretive.
- Don't talk too much or too little.
- Don't wear a hat or dark glasses.
- Don't talk about personal problems.
- Don't talk negatively about past schooling, jobs, or supervisors.
- Don't ask the interviewer if the company is stable or unstable.
- Don't fidget.
- Don't use slang.

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## Job Interview Role-play

An interview gives an employer a chance to find out about you and see if you'd be a good fit for the company. How you respond to questions, your body language, how you pay attention, and most of all how you "sell yourself" are all important. It's a chance to show your skills, including what you've learned in treatment and through past experiences.

In this session we will break into smaller groups to role-play job interviews. Take turns role-playing the applicant and the employer.

### Tips for your interview:

- Look professional.
- Make good eye contact.
- Be friendly.
- Be respectful.
- Smile.
- Stand and sit tall.
- Shake hands firmly.
- Show you have interest.
- Don't be defensive.
- Don't fidget.

**Don't give false information in an interview.** Here are a few ways to respond to questions regarding your past:

- **When asked about gaps** you can say, "I can see how my work history might concern you. That was some time ago, and since then I've maintained an excellent work record. I come to work on time, I'm a hard worker, I'm a quick learner, and I'll be a great employee."
- **If asked about your past** you can say, "I can see why you have questions about my background, but I've learned from my mistakes. I've spent some time training for a new career and improving my life. I'm now more mature, and I'll be a strong, dedicated employee."

Practice role-playing your job interviews. After the role-plays, consider the questions on the next page.

JOB INTERVIEW ROLE-PLAY | *continued*

What things were the most difficult for me during the role-play?

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What can I do before a real interview to make things easier?

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What did I learn from the role-play that might be helpful in the real situation?

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## How to Make a Budget

Understanding how much money you need is something to consider when looking for employment. Do you go to school and only need part-time work? Do you need a full-time job to support yourself and your family? Creating a budget is one way to stay **accountable and responsible**.

This budget template of monthly income and expenses might be helpful:

MONTHLY EXPENSES		MONTHLY INCOME	
Housing:	\$	Employment:	\$
Utilities:	\$	Partner employment:	\$
Phone:	\$	Other job income:	\$
Credit cards:	\$	Unemployment:	\$
Food:	\$	Social Security:	\$
Child support:	\$	TANF:	\$
Transportation:	\$	Food stamps:	\$
Car payment:	\$	Child support:	\$
Gas:	\$	Savings interest:	\$
Insurance:	\$	Other:	\$
Cable TV:	\$	Other:	\$
Clothing:	\$	Other:	\$
<b>Total expenses:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>Total income:</b>	<b>\$</b>

If your expenses are more than your income, find ways to cut back on spending or make more money through additional work (an extra part-time job, for example.)

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## Boundaries

Setting healthy personal boundaries is necessary to promote a positive self-image and communicate who we are. Personal boundaries are the physical and emotional limits we establish to avoid being manipulated or violated by others. Boundaries help us define who we are.

**Setting personal boundaries is part of taking responsibility for who you are and taking control of your life.** Sometimes recovering offenders have problems setting boundaries. They might have had poor boundaries during incarceration or in antisocial situations. These boundaries may not be appropriate in a prosocial lifestyle.

### **Here are some ways to establish healthy boundaries:**

1. Set clear and decisive limits that support your intended lifestyle. Once you set your boundaries, stick with them.
2. Recognize that your needs are important. Offenders sometimes think they need to put the needs of everyone in the family ahead of their own. Family members also need to learn to be responsible for themselves.
3. Learn to say no. Often recovering offenders try to please everyone. They tend to put themselves last as they try to re-establish themselves back in the family unit. It is OK to take care of yourself.
4. Identify what behaviors you find unacceptable. Don't be afraid to let others know when you need space. It's healthy to have your own space once in a while, as long as you're not isolating.
5. Trust yourself. You are the one who knows you best. Know what you need, want, and value.

Do any of these signs of unhealthy boundaries apply to you? (Check those that do.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Going against personal values to please others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Taking as much as you can from others emotionally
- \_\_\_\_\_ Letting others define you
- \_\_\_\_\_ Expecting others to fill your needs

BOUNDARIES | *continued*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Feeling guilty when you say no
- \_\_\_\_\_ Falling apart so others can take care of you
- \_\_\_\_\_ Touching someone inappropriately or without permission
- \_\_\_\_\_ Letting someone touch you or accepting sexual advances that you don't want
- \_\_\_\_\_ Letting others talk you into things you know are wrong
- \_\_\_\_\_ Staying in relationships with angry, critical people
- \_\_\_\_\_ Being terrified of abandonment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confusing love and pity

Based on the checklist above, what are the boundaries you feel you need to change?

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What are the ways you plan to change your unhealthy boundaries?

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## “What I Hear You Saying Is...”

Often recovering offenders have problems communicating their needs, wants, desires, and emotions appropriately. As a result they become frustrated and angry when they think no one understands them. That can lead to intimidation tactics, threats, or even violent outbursts.

Communication is key to mutual understanding. Communication problems can even lead to criminal behaviors.

### **Check the things that have prevented you from fully listening to others:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Being too busy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Being preoccupied with your own problems
- \_\_\_\_\_ Being upset
- \_\_\_\_\_ Being angry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Being focused on another issue
- \_\_\_\_\_ Not caring what others have to say

### **Try this two-person exercise to improve your communication skills.**

*Step 1.* One person will be the speaker and the other the listener. The speaker chooses a topic for conversation.

*Step 2.* The speaker shares his or her view on that topic using “I” statements such as, “When I heard you come in last night, I was upset and worried.” The listener listens to the words and tone of the speaker.

*Step 3.* After the speaker is finished, the listener states what he or she heard in the form of “I” statements such as, “I heard you say...” The speaker listens to the words and tone of the listener.

*Step 4.* The speaker expresses whether he or she was understood correctly. If that answer is no, then the speaker continues to explain until he or she feels understood.

After the exercise, discuss how it felt to be both the speaker and the listener. If time permits, try switching roles.





## Seeing the New Me

Recovering offenders often present themselves as very confident or even overconfident (cocky). In reality, many don't have very high self-esteem. They may not want others to see they are vulnerable. **But now it's time to see yourself more positively, in light of the positive changes you are making.** You've worked hard and overcome a lot of obstacles. You need to see yourself as worthy. If you don't feel like you deserve good things happening to you, perhaps you are mistaken. You are deserving! You deserve the rewards that will come your way by living a prosocial and sober life.

Below are a few ways that help many people improve how they see themselves. Which of the following might you be able to try?

- Replace negative thoughts about yourself with positive ones every time you realize you are thinking a negative thought.
- Repeat your positive thoughts over and over to yourself out loud whenever you get a chance and even share them with another person, if possible.
- Write down your positive thoughts.
- Make signs with these positive messages and hang them in places where you'll see them often (for example, on your refrigerator door or bathroom mirror). Repeat the thoughts to yourself several times when you see the signs. Here are some examples:

NEGATIVE THOUGHT	REPLACE WITH A POSITIVE THOUGHT
I'm not worth anything.	I'm a valuable person.
I've never accomplished anything.	I've accomplished many things.
I always make mistakes.	I do many things well.
I'm a jerk.	I'm a great person.
I don't deserve a good life.	I deserve to be happy and healthy.

SEEING THE NEW ME | *continued*

What are some of the negative thoughts you've had or still have? What positive thoughts can replace these negative thoughts? Write them down here.

NEGATIVE	POSITIVE

Remember, you're a strong person who has worked hard. Look at yourself in a positive way!

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## Getting Past the Code

When people get involved in the criminal justice system, and particularly when they're incarcerated, they learn an unspoken criminal code. The code dictates that you keep your mouth shut, you don't side with the authorities against another offender, and most of all, you don't "snitch."

Even people who have been incarcerated for a drug-related offense find themselves exposed daily to inmates who are violent and intimidating. To fit in and survive, you have to mimic the behaviors you see around you. Many people begin to talk and act aggressively and to lie just to survive.

While those codes may have been part of your past experience, they won't work well with your new crime-free, substance-free life. Treatment encourages you to be honest and truthful. And that includes recognizing some of the "code" behaviors you may have adopted during your incarceration.

List the "code" behaviors you learned while incarcerated that are preventing you from being honest and truthful:

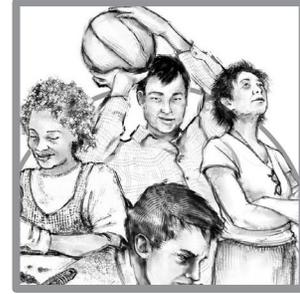
1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Part of building a new life is moving on from old ways of thinking and behaving. Some of the old ways that worked in jail have no place in the free world. Those who keep those old criminal codes and behaviors run a high risk of returning to jail or prison, and/or using substances.

These are the things I will do to stay honest and truthful:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_





## Adapting to the Free World

Recovering offenders who have been incarcerated had highly structured lives during that time. There was a set time to get up, to eat, to do various activities, and to go to bed. Once released you may have some problems adapting to free world life.

Below is a list of common problems some people experience. Determine where you are on each rating scale.

**Currently I'm having problems with:**

### Family

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No problems				Some problems			Significant problems		

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Specific problems with family:

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### Employment

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No problems				Some problems			Significant problems		

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Specific problems with employment:

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### Friends

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No problems				Some problems			Significant problems		

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Specific problem with friends:

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ADAPTING TO THE FREE  
WORLD

| *continued*

### Other Support Systems

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No problems			Some problems				Significant problems		

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Specific problems with other support systems:

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### Housing

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No problems			Some problems				Significant problems		

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Specific problems with housing:

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### Other

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No problems			Some problems				Significant problems		

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Specific problems with other issues:

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**Now that you've identified some problems, what might be some possible solutions?**

For my family issues I plan to:

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ADAPTING TO THE FREE  
WORLD

| *continued*

For my employment issues I plan to:

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For my problems with friends I plan to:

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For my other support system issues I plan to:

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For my issues with housing I plan to:

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For my other problems I plan to:

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## Living a Balanced Lifestyle

Part of recovery is maintaining a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Healthy habits help you feel better mentally and physically, and strengthen your recovery. Use these ideas for improvement in the areas of exercise, diet, dental health, and lifelong healthy living.

### Exercise

For health benefits, **physical activity should be moderate or vigorous:** exercise should make you breathe harder and your heart beat faster. Each week, adults should do at least 2-1/2 hours of moderate exercise, or 1-1/4 hours of vigorous exercise. Adults should also do strengthening activities, like push-ups, sit-ups, and lifting weights, at least two days a week.

Light-intensity activities don't increase your heart rate, so they don't count toward these physical activity recommendations. These activities include walking at a casual pace, such as while grocery shopping, and doing light household chores.

*My exercise plan:*

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### Diet

Eat the right amount of calories for you: Everyone has a personal calorie limit. Staying within yours can help you get to or maintain a healthy weight. People who are successful at managing their weight have found ways to keep track of how much they eat in a day, even if they don't count every calorie. Other tips include:

- Enjoy your food, but eat less.
- Cook more often at home, where you are in control of what's in your food.

LIVING A BALANCED LIFESTYLE | *continued*

**Build a healthy plate**

Before you eat, think about what goes on your plate or in your cup or bowl.

- Foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean protein foods contain the nutrients you need without too many calories. Try some of these options.
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Switch to skim or 1% milk.
- Make at least half your grains whole.
- Vary your protein food choices.

*My plan for a healthier diet:*

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**Dental Health**

Follow these tips to maintain a healthy smile:

- Brush your teeth carefully at least twice every 24 hours. Ideally, you should brush after every meal. At the very least, brush once a day and always before you go to bed.
- Floss your teeth daily. Flossing cleans those areas your toothbrush can't reach.
- Eat well-balanced meals. Drink plenty of water. Liquids such as coffee and red wine stain the color of your teeth.
- Do not smoke or chew tobacco! It promotes serious dental problems such as gum disease and oral cancer. This is an expensive habit that also causes health problems.
- Check your gums regularly for signs of disease—red, puffy gums or gums that bleed even slightly when you brush or floss. Notify your dentist if any of these signs occur.
- See your dentist regularly for checkups and professional cleanings.

LIVING A BALANCED LIFESTYLE | *continued*

### **Lifelong Health Concerns**

Here are some things to do to reduce your risk of disease:

- Quit smoking or chewing tobacco.
- Check your cholesterol. If it is high, treat it.
- Treat high blood pressure. Follow your doctor's advice on a diet and/or medication.
- Be physically active. A regular exercise program reduces your risk of a heart attack by 35 to 55 percent. Try to get at least 20 to 30 minutes of moderate physical activity daily.
- Maintain a healthy weight for your height. Being overweight increases your risk of developing diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol, which in turn increases your risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Get eight hours of sleep every night.
- Get a yearly medical examination.

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**Abstain from alcohol and other drugs.**

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