

START NOW

COMMUNITY EDITION **Workbook**

Unit 4

The Future Me: Continuing My Path to Success



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The Future Me: Continuing My Path to Success

Session 27

Believing in My Future



Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 26



ABC In-Session Practice Exercise

Some people picture themselves in the future. They can imagine their future lives. They have dreams and goals for their futures. They think about how they want their futures to be. They imagine that they'll grow old someday.

Others do not have a picture of themselves in the future. They do not imagine their own future. They may think they will not have a future. Some don't think beyond the immediate next few hours or days.

Others may think they won't have a meaningful future. Some of these people expect to die young. Some others expect that nothing will ever improve and decide that as a result their lives are meaningless.



Group Discussion

- Why do you think some people stop picturing that they'll have a future (or a meaningful future)?

- How do you think picturing a future vs. not picturing a future affects people?
- Do you think someone's past has to limit their future?

- **Believing in My Future- Skills**
- **Use positive self-talk about your future.** Say encouraging things to yourself like-
 - *“I’m turning things around.”*
 - *“I **will** get a job.”*
 - *“I’ll find love again.”*
- **Notice thought errors about your future and replace them with hopeful, realistic thoughts.** See session 14 for more information about this.

Thought Error	Description	Thought Errors about Your Future	Replacing Thought Errors
All or Nothing Thinking	Thinking in extremes. Often includes words like always, never, all, nothing, etc.	<i>“Nothing will ever go right for me.” “I will never amount to anything.”</i>	<i>“Many things will go right for me.” “I am good enough right now.”</i>
Mind-reading	Believing you know what other people think or feel.	<i>“No cares about what happens to me.”</i>	<i>“I can think of some people who care about me.”</i>
Negative Self-Talk	Thoughts that put you down & make you feel bad about yourself.	<i>“I’m too stupid to pass my GED.”</i>	<i>“I’ll study and practice. That will increase the chance I’ll pass.”</i>
Expecting the Worst	Telling yourself that things are not going to work out.	<i>“My family won’t ever accept me.” Or- “I’m going to die young.”</i>	<i>“I can improve my relationships with family members.” “I’m taking care of myself and staying out of trouble. I’ll probably live a good long life.”</i>

- **Use Positive Imagery.** Picture yourself having a successful future. Imagine yourself meeting the goals you have for yourself.

In-Group Exercise

Your group leader will lead you in a positive imagery practice exercise.



Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise

The Future Me: Continuing My Path to Success

Session 28 Setting & Making My Goals



Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 27



Focusing In-Session Practice Exercise

Start out with a positive view of your future. Now set goals that build that future. Today we'll look at how to set and achieve goals. Learning to set and make your goals increases your chance for success.

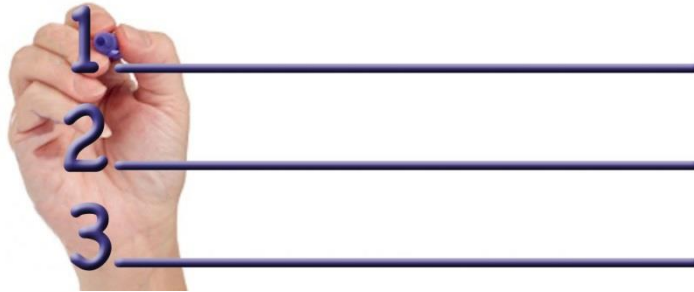
Think of the offensive line of a football team . . .



How does keeping the goal in mind affect their game? How is their game affected if they don't keep the goal in mind?

How do you think having a goal in mind affects you?

Setting Goals



✓ **Set your goal high enough to inspire you, but not so high it's out of reach.**

How can you figure out if your goal is the right level for you?

- Ask someone who has related knowledge.
- Get more information about what it takes to meet that goal.
- Consider aiming a bit high, as long as you will be kind to yourself if you end up somewhere between your current spot and there.
- If you're unsure, choose a goal in closer reach, knowing that you can always set a further goal after you make that one.

✓ **Make your goal as specific as possible.**

- Get a clear picture in your mind of how it will look when you meet your goal.
- Choose a date to start working on your goal, and a target date for meeting your goal. Think about things that can affect your timeline. Set a target date that takes those things into account.
- Consider adding a number to your goal. For example, if your goal is to work out more, how many times per week do you plan to do it?

✓ **Make your goal stronger.**

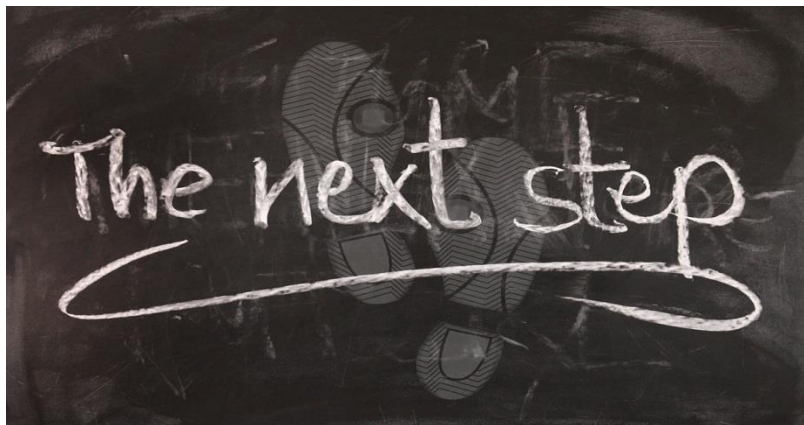
- Write it down.
- Tell someone your goal, especially someone who's been a positive support to you.
- Think about difficulties that can get in the way of making your goal. Come up with a plan ahead of time for dealing with those difficulties, if possible. Next session will focus on "Problem Solving" which may help you do this.

Making My Goal

**Make a plan for meeting your goal.
Break it down step by step.
Write it down.**



1. First use brainstorming to come up with lots of possible steps. Be sure to include the following types of steps in your plan:
 - Getting the information you need.
 - Asking for support.
 - Getting any materials needed.
 - Listing other sub-tasks that have to be done. What are all the mini- steps needed to reach the goal?



2. Decide which of the possible steps are needed to make your goal. Cross out the ones that aren't needed.

3. Figure out what order the steps should be done in. Write them down in that order.

Group Practice Exercise

Making My Goal

Use the “Making My Goal” steps on the previous page to come up with steps for the goal below.

Goal: *I will pass my GED test by six months from now.*

Space for Brainstorming of Possible Steps toward the Goal

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Steps to Meet my Goal

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



Who can help me to meet my goal?

1. _____
2. _____



Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise

The Future Me: Continuing My Path to Success

Session 29 Problem-Solving



Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 28



ABC In-Session Practice Exercise

So you have a positive view of the future, set a goal, and make a plan to reach your goal . . .

You will still run into barriers as you move toward a successful future. It happens to everyone. Problems occur. Unexpected difficulties come up.



When problems occur, some continue to move forward and some get off track. Problem-solving skills make the difference. Problem solving is a method that works well for a wide range of problems. This skill can turn a crisis into a manageable challenge to tackle. It can replace panic with calm.

Problem-Solving Steps



- 1. Define the problem as clearly as possible.**
Describe the problem. Be specific about what is not going well. Describe what outcome or result you are looking for.
- 2. Use brainstorming to come up with many possible solutions.**
Think of and write down as many possible solutions as possible. At this phase, do not try to figure out whether each one is a good.

- 3. Evaluate the possible solutions, and come up with a plan.**

There are 2 methods for this:

1. Go through the list and choose the one that appears to have the best chance for success.
2. Go through the list and give each item from 0 to 3 points (some people like to draw 0 to 3 stars or checkmarks). Then look at the ones you rated the highest, and combine them into a plan.



- 4. Follow the plan.** Evaluate how it worked out. Repeat steps 2 to 4, if necessary.

Group Practice Exercise:

Using the Problem-Solving Method

1. Define the problem as clearly as possible.

Describe the problem. Be specific. Remember to avoid thought errors like all or nothing thinking.

2. Use brainstorming to come up with many possible solutions.

List all possible solutions here (continue to the back of the page, if needed).

3. Evaluate the possible solutions, and develop a plan.

What is the plan?

4. Follow the plan. Evaluate how it worked out.


How did the plan work out?




Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise

The Future Me: Continuing My Path to Success

Session 30 Setting & Reaching Educational Goals

 **Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 29**

 **Focusing In-Session Practice Exercise**



Group Discussion

How can education be helpful to a person?

What has gotten in the way of getting an education? Drugs or alcohol use?

Setting Educational Goals

- When considering educational goals, use open and balanced thinking. For example, you may believe that further education is not for you. Open and balanced thinking may help you see new options for learning.
- Apply goal-setting skills. This includes setting your goal high enough to inspire you, but not so high it's out of reach. Break it down to small, specific goals, knowing that you can always add next steps after meeting those goals. Here are some examples-
 - Make a commitment to attend GED classes, without deciding yet whether you'll take the GED test.
 - Get information about a specialized training program, for example, to become a carpenter or a chef. Learn about the program, even if you're not sure whether you'd like to apply.
 - Take one college class, even though you're not sure whether you want to go all the way for a degree.
- Use brainstorming to come up with possibilities.

Group Brainstorming Activity #1: As a group, list everything that comes to mind about how people can work on their education while incarcerated.

Group Brainstorming Activity #2: As a group, list everything that comes to mind about how people can work on their education while in the community.

Skills for Reaching Educational Goals

► Use focusing skills to reach educational goals.

- **During classes**, the following strategies can help you focus:
 - If possible choose a seat in front. This helps reduce visual distractions.
 - Remind yourself to “focus”. If you find that your attention has wandered, gently turn it back to the topic.
 - Do things that help you focus more actively, like taking notes, asking questions, or making comments.
- **While studying**, the following strategies can help you focus:
 - Choose a place where you feel as comfortable as possible, with as few distractions as possible.
 - Commit to focus for a certain amount of time then take a break.
 - Find ways to make your studying active. For example, take notes, ask yourself questions, make charts, etc.

► Use interpersonal skills to reach educational goals.

- **Increase your support system.** Look for people who can support you with your educational goal. Spend time and get to know them.



- **Use assertive communication.** This is especially useful when asking for help with your educational goals.

► Use accepting myself skills to reach educational goals.

Encourage yourself. Tell yourself you can be successful. If you put yourself down with negative self-talk, replace it with positive self-talk.



Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise

The Future Me: Continuing My Path to Success

Session 31

Setting & Reaching Vocational Goals



Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 30



ABC In-Session Practice Exercise

**SET GOAL.
MAKE PLAN.
GET TO WORK.
STICK TO IT.
REACH GOAL.**

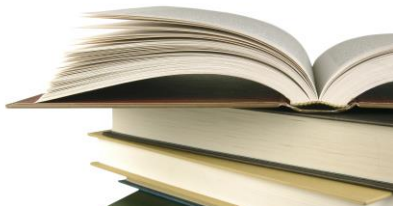
In this session, we'll take a look at how the Start Now skills can be used for one particular part of your future: finding a job.

Many people believe that work, whether paid or volunteer, is a very important part of life. What benefits do you believe work can bring to your life? In what ways do you picture that specific jobs may support or endanger your sobriety? The benefits can be within you or outside of you:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Group Discussion

What kinds of things have gotten in the way of you getting or keeping a job?



Things to Consider When Looking for Work:

Be Aware of Who You Are

This is similar to what we talked about in the first unit of Start Now, **My Foundation**. To be aware of who you are, you could use all the skills listed in that first unit:

- **Focusing Skills**
- **ABC**
- **Accepting Myself and My Situation**
- **Developing an Open Attitude**
- **Celebrating My Spiritual Self**
- **Developing My Values**
- **Respecting My Personal Boundaries**



Think about your strengths as seen in this example below. Too often we focus on our weakness and don't list and remember what we are good at doing. Maybe you are a good business person; maybe you are a people person and could be great at sales.

Group Discussion

Al was raised in a family that valued being “handy.” When something broke, people were expected to figure out how to fix it. Al learned to fix a lot of things by getting in there and working with his hands. When he couldn’t figure out how to fix something, he learned by watching someone else do it. While Al can get along with people, he especially likes time on his own. Al knows these things

about himself. How do you think this knowledge affects the kind of jobs that may be a good fit for him?

Finding Out about Job Openings



There are many ways to hear about job openings. The following list is just a sample. These tips relate to job openings of all types. There is some space at the end for other suggestions the group may be able to come up with.

- ▶ **Talk to family, friends, teachers, counselors, and other positive people in your life about possible job leads.**

Who could you turn to for help?

- ▶ **Keep an eye open for signs and notices of job openings.**

Where have you seen such signs or notices?

- ▶ **Look in the want ads, or the website, of your local newspaper. Check the Internet for job postings.**

What websites post job openings?

- ▶ **Participate in a Vocational Issues support group.**

▶ If you know people who have jobs that sound interesting to you, ask them about the job and how they got it.

▶ Contact your local employment services or Labor Department to see if you might be eligible for their help.

Other Suggestions from the Group:

Making your First Contact

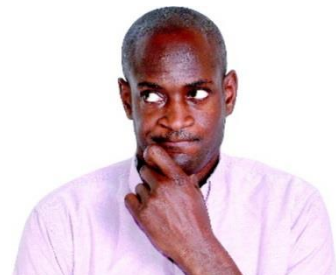
- Be well groomed and dressed. Ask for the Manager. Rehearse what you will say and ask for.
- Revisit how to handle anxiety using coping skills and avoiding alcohol or drugs.
- Fill out the application as completely as possible, whether a paper application, or by computer. It may help to gather all the information you need, like addresses, on a sheet of paper or a card. Then you can copy it onto the application.
- Follow up with a phone call approximately three days later, unless the Manager tells you something different about following up.
- Set goals about how many applications to submit in a certain period of time



In-Group Exercise

Role play-

- How to ask a manager for an application.
- What to say when calling to follow up on an application you've done.
- How you would answer the question about why you should get the job?



Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise

The Future Me: Continuing My Path to Success

Session 32 Celebrating & Continuing My Progress



Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 32



Focusing In-Session Practice Exercise

Hopefully, you are on a path of positive change. If not, it is always possible to turn in that direction. If so, it is helpful to stop at times and give yourself credit for what you have achieved.



In-Group Exercise

Here are some positive changes I've made, and/or steps I've taken toward my goals:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Skills for Continuing My Progress

- **Accept the Twisting Upward Path of Positive Change.** Even when people are on a path of positive change, there are twist and turns. Most people experience setbacks along the way. Each of us is a “work in progress”. We aren’t ever finished becoming our best selves. It’s never too late to make changes for the better. Don’t give up. Keep learning. Keep improving. Change takes time for everyone.
- **Be Patient with Yourself.** Recovery is often a lifelong challenge AND it is within reach. Allow yourself to look for and accept help.
- **Be a Positive Coach to Yourself.** Use positive self-talk to encourage yourself to keep moving forward successfully.
- **Review your START NOW Materials.** Consider doing some of exercises again, to reflect new situations in your life.
- **Stick with the Winners.** Spend time with people whose lives you admire.
- **Build new supports as your life changes.** People will move into and out of your life over time. Don’t let the goodbyes get you down. Build new relationships using the skills you’ve learned here.
- **Recognize that many people feel anxious about positive changes.** People often find positive change nerve-wracking because it’s unknown territory. Use your skills to cope with that anxiety.



Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise