Charting a New Course
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**Acknowledgments**

We gratefully acknowledge the work and research of Dr. Yochelson and Dr. Stanton E. Samenow whose studies and research have spurred so many of the concepts and ideas presented herein. Their research into the Criminal Personality spans more than three decades, yet continues to carve a path far ahead of other “cutting-edge” theories regarding anti-social behavior. We are exceedingly grateful for their insight as well as much of the other contemporary research regarding cognitive restructuring.
Introduction & Instructions

Charting a New Course is designed for use with youth or adults in any group or classroom setting. The lesson plans are created with the busy facilitator in mind offering brief, start to finish instructions for each of the 110 cognitive behavioral group exercises. The lesson plans are easy to follow so that someone with no previous exposure to Truthought® can implement this curriculum with ease.

Ideally, groups using this curriculum will be open-ended allowing new members to join at any time. But the curriculum is flexible to allow for groups with set beginning and end dates as well.

Charting a New Course Layout

At the beginning of each tabbed section is a brief overview of the Tactic or Thinking Barrier that is the topic of that section followed by ten or more group-tested, evidence-based, cognitive behavioral exercises and lesson plans designed to develop cognitive processes for responsible decision-making and to promote pro-social, responsible lifestyles. Each section also includes role-playing scenarios crafted to demonstrate Responsible Thinking and to provide initial practice in using Responsible Thinking skills in contrast to the corresponding Thinking Barriers and Tactics. Together, the written exercises and role-playing scenarios make important contributions to the learning environment. They are designed to maximize learning and to develop skills for choosing thought processes for better lifestyles.

Lesson Plan Instructions

The overview at the beginning of each section provides the framework to explain each Thinking Barrier and corresponding Responsible Thinking Correctives to your group members. The exercises that follow are flexible enough to be administered in any order. Each exercise is preceded by instructions posted on an envelope that looks like this.

Many exercises cover more than one page. Look for the envelope to signal the beginning and end of exercise pages. Instructions posted on each envelope include:
- A suggested common ground statement
- An objective that further describes the goals for your time together.
- Specific directions and guidelines for facilitating each of the 110 group exercises

You will also find selected quotes interspersed throughout the course. Some of these quotes...
you may find appropriate to share with your learners. Most of them, however, are included simply to encourage and stimulate your thinking as a facilitator.

**IMPORTANT**

Only the *Charting a New Course* exercise pages may be reproduced and only for use as handout material to learners served by the purchasing agency, organization, or individual. Exercises may not be reproduced for use outside of the purchasing entity. Overviews, narratives, instructions and other information contained within *Charting A New Course* may not be reproduced whether in part or in whole.

**Visual Tools**

You will need a set of posters for each classroom and a pocket guide for each learner in the group. The language of the posters is the language used in *Charting a New Course* to discuss thinking and behavior. They are an essential visual tool for both the facilitator and participants.

The posters and pocket guides uphold the group standard by putting the thinking and behavior to follow or to avoid clearly in focus. Learners are frequently asked to identify their thinking barriers, responsible thinking, or tactics on the corresponding poster or their pocket guide.

### Barriers In Thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers In Thinking</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Thought Inversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Confront others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Paralysis of Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Negative Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Unrealistic thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fear of failure</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Stable perfection</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Pessimism</td>
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<td>9. Perfectionism</td>
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</tbody>
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### Responsible Thinking Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible Thinking Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Task Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Self-motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Self-assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Self-responsibility</td>
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</tbody>
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### “Time-Bomb” Tactics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time-Bomb Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Shit Happens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Blame Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Avoid Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Deny Responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### “Stay on Track” Poster

- **Maintain Positive Properties**
  - **Thinks of the Consequences Before You Act**
  - **Remember Who Gets Hurt?**
  - **Act On Plans To Make a Responsible Choice**
  - **Almost Everybody Does It**
  - **Check Your Thinking**
  - **Keep Thinking Responsible Thoughts**

### If Your Life Was a Movie How Would It Be Rated?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GR</th>
<th>GA</th>
<th>GI</th>
<th>GE</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>8.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Way of Life Continuum of Thinking/Behavior

- **If Not Correct**
  - **If Not Correct**
  - **If Not Correct**
  - **If Not Correct**

- **If Correct**
  - **If Correct**
  - **If Correct**
  - **If Correct**

The *Stay on Track Poster* is used for reviewing consequences, for problem solving, decision-making, and for role-playing. The *Way of Life Poster* is used to identify lifestyle patterns and the direction one’s life is headed.
By referring to the posters facilitators decrease the opportunity for power struggles that emerge when learners perceive the facilitator as “the standard” and create an “us against them” atmosphere. Pointing to the Poster Series as the standard for facilitators and participants alike says to your students that you really care about the way they learn – within the realm of individual discovery, dignity, and mutual respect.

The lesson selected by the facilitator for that day follows the opening ritual. The session is frequently closed with a verbal and written closing commitment from group members to do something different and report back at the next group session. It is important that facilitators carefully pace and coordinate the use of group commitments with other facilitators to avoid overwhelming group participants with more new responsibility than they can practically handle. Keeping levels of commitment within reachable achievement is crucial to the process.

**The Group Purpose** is best when it is brief and to the point such as, “The purpose of our group is to find solutions to our problems and learn to live pro social, responsible lives.” A longer group purpose is not easily remembered and loses its emphasis as it goes on.

**The Group Creed:** “Crime hurts people. When I commit crime I hurt people. I will not hurt others or myself again.” Of course other topics than crime can be substituted such as, drugs, or irresponsibility or one that suits your group.

You will need to develop **Group Expectations** that are relevant to your group but at minimum they should include expectations of timeliness, participation, homework, and how you will treat each other during your time together. This could involve conversation, listening, how to ask questions, appropriate movement, and more. It is advised that the Group Expectations be read aloud by one of the participants prior to every group.

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**Group Facilitation and Delivery**

When participants enter the group room they are expected to:

- Check-in, turn in any assignments,
- Write their name on a sticky-note and post it on one of the columns on the Way of Life Poster that most closely represents how they have been thinking since your last group meeting
- Then take their seat.

The group begins with a brief welcome followed by routine recitals:

- Group Purpose
- Group Creed
- Group Expectations
- Common Ground for that day’s lesson
- Review Way of Life sticky-note posts and follow-up on any previous commitments
A **Common Ground** is the group’s common goal and focus for your time together. Many times your group participants have different goals in mind. Their goals may be to get by with as little effort as possible, or to get out of the program as quickly as possible (even if it means getting kicked out), or the goal may be to side rail the meeting and get lots of attention, and so on. A common ground points everyone in the same direction so that you all have the same finish line in mind. It has the added benefit of helping bring participants back on task when it is referred to during the group process, but only if it established up front.

Typically, the common ground would be posted on the board. Learners are expected to write it down and recite it aloud together. Rarely, learners will resist or refuse. After offering several opportunities for them to change their mind, if they persist it indicates they are not willing to participate or comply with the group and that they prefer to receive a consequence.

At first glance the recitals might seem to be a time-waster to the responsible staff person. The idea of reciting the same kind of information prior to every meeting seems redundant, unnecessary, and condescending. To us, it might suggest that someone thinks we are not capable of “getting it” or of supervising ourselves. We would certainly not get away with this kind of routine for long in our staff meetings.

The opening ritual serves a different purpose for participants who are irresponsible and their opinion of it is quite different, too. Many learners find it difficult to trust others. After a few meetings, the predictability of the ritual sends the message that this is a trustworthy, safe process and there is no need to be on guard. This is reassurance that responsible people do not need, whereas the irresponsible person is put at ease by the predictability of the opening recital. If it is skipped participants will immediately ask why and request that the routine be followed. The ritual sends a message of predictability that translates to one of safety and sets the tone for a productive session.

**Review of Way of Life sticky-note posts.** Learners are encouraged to place their name on the column of the poster that best represents the way they have been thinking during the time since you last met. Initially, they may pile up on the responsible column. When this happens it is a good opportunity to explain that even if they had no infractions it does not mean that their thinking was free from irresponsible thoughts. Their thoughts may run along the lines of wanting to get high, to run away, or to hurt someone that bugs them, or wanting to take something that does not belong to them. It is vital that they come to grips with the fact that their behavior will eventually follow their thinking. If their behavior has been great, but their thoughts have not, they are not changing.

It’s important that they understand that this is a safe place to talk openly about their thinking. Hold them accountable for lying if they place
themselves on the Responsible column early on and ask them to select a different column. You can ask the group to help them, if they resist. The group is usually aware of incidents that reflect other columns that might be a better choice. Another incentive to honesty is to offer points for accuracy. If a learner accurately places their sticky-note they get 2 points. If they have to move their sticky-note they lose a point. Initially, and perhaps most of the time, they will actually lose points for putting themselves in the Responsible column.

Closing Commitments and follow-up. Requiring learners to make a commitment to do something different is crucial to the change process. Without this action it is easy for learners to absorb knowledge without translating it into personal change. They learn to “talk the talk” but not to “walk the walk.” Learners should be encouraged to choose commitments that are within their reach. For example, a person who is prone to violence might make a commitment to stay out of fights for a week, or a person who is chronically late might make a commitment to be on time next week. Although we would prefer they stay out of fights for the rest of their life, or that they arrive promptly to all of their appointments a commitment of that magnitude would likely end in failure. It is essential that the commitments to do something different allow the person to achieve an 80% success rate in order for the momentum of change to take place. For that to happen we need to guide their choices to bite-sizes that are within their capacity, but still offer a bit of a challenge.

Make It Fool-proof

You can make their commitments to do something different fool-proof by adding just the right cognitive behavioral consequence if they do not follow through with their commitment. The beauty of this arrangement is that the participant learns and gains ground either way through compliance or through consequence.
As a facilitator you can relax, do not take it personally when they fail to comply because your job is done either way if you have established effective cognitive behavioral consequences. It is up to the facilitator as to how frequently to ask learners for commitments to do something different. You do not want to overwhelm them with more than they can handle, but you do not want them going through the motions and unchallenged either. The savvy facilitator keeps a close eye on the needs of the group and what will be helpful for each individual.

**Facilitating Role-playing**

Each tabbed section contains some exercises with optional role-playing--a powerful teaching tool when facilitated well.

When the group is new to role-playing introduce it to them by explaining what it is and what it is not. It is a chance to apply what we have been learning. It is not a drama where the actor is playing for the audience. The situation they are role-playing is taken from the real world and the actors are playing to find solutions, not to provide entertainment. Keep this in mind when assigning parts. If participants are not ready they may be uneasy and that is expected, but sometimes it may lead them to act like a “ham” and play to the audience, rather than focus on finding solutions.

**When participants are re-enacting a past personal incident or practicing for a future encounter** it will be critical for the facilitator to help them set the stage by asking:

- Who are you meeting with?
- Where are you meeting?
- Are you sitting or standing?
- What has happened already?
- What do you hope will happen when you meet?
- What reactions do you anticipate?
- What alternatives are you prepared for?

**After the role-play ask the group:**

- What goals did the main player have? How well were they met?
- What goals did the 2nd player have? How well were they met?
- Were their goals in conflict or agreement? Was a win-win achieved or within reach?
- What did they do that helped them meet their goals?
- What did they do that hindered their progress?
- What suggestions can you offer?

It is up to the facilitator to keep the role-play dialog and action moving and to keep the role-playing focused on what needs to happen next. Don’t allow too much time to be spent in long dialog; once a point has been made or a step has been completed if the players do not move on, stop the action by saying “Freeze!” Keep the focus and pace moving by asking the entire group, “What has to happen now?”

*Example:* role-players are discussing a step for building relationships called “finding mutual interests.” They are correctly talking about interests they have in common as a step for building relationships. While this is correct it could go on and on in the dialog. So, after a few minutes of
the role players clearly establishing their mutual interests you would say, “okay, freeze!” Then simply mention, “this is correct, they would continue talking about mutual interests for quite a while, but what step needs to happen next?” Bring the group to focus on what happens next and ask the role-players to proceed with the next step.

Keep it moving. Role playing merely takes up time if players simply act out parts and invent dialog.

Keep reminding them what to portray; “freeze” the action when it is not demonstrating what it should and ask, “What has to happen next?” Urge all group participants to offer suggestions.

The following should occur in successful role plays:

- The persons playing the roles should agree as to what the problem is.
- There should be exploration of possible solutions.
- There should be mutual agreement on a solution.

Make role play assignments clear so that each person knows what’s expected of them, but be careful not to give so much detail that they do not have to do any problem-solving.

Facilitator Preparation, Delivery and Style

The facilitator prepares for the session by choosing a lesson from a chapter (tabbed section) that is suited to the thinking and behavior dynamics the group has currently been demonstrating-- a lesson from a section that closely resembles the kind of thinking most group members seem to engage at present. Facilitators should exercise their own judgement in choosing lessons from the curriculum in an order and sequence suited to the groups’ thinking and behavior patterns. It is not necessary or recommended to do lessons in sequence. It will be far more beneficial to choose lessons based on current thinking and behavior of participants.

Sessions may run 40 minutes up to 2 hours depending on your program and the group size. Many of the 110 exercises in this curriculum will take more than one group session to complete.

There is no need to rush to get lessons finished in one session. It is more important to complete the opening ritual and delay part of the lesson than to rush through the opening in order to get to the lesson.

When asking questions or listening to responses the facilitator maintains genuine interest in participants, encouraging and showing interest in their views and opinions without projecting undue judgment or approval on those views.

Facilitators have a neutral and approachable manner and deal with questions confidently and accurately. The facilitator avoids asking “WHY” about behavior, instead asks questions like “What were you thinking?” or “What happened?” or “What is your responsibility?” Misbehavior intended to get attention is often ignored. Calm responses that help learners stay on task are directed toward learners who like to disrupt the process or challenge staff.
The gentle, but clear and firm message is “No one gets out of participating or out of assigned work by misbehaving.”

The facilitator varies tone and pace to add interest and variety to the lesson. They encourage learner participation and personal applications by asking open-ended questions and paraphrasing learner comments. They are comfortable with pauses or brief silence and they guide the process without dominating. They stay factual and emotionally neutral when describing behavior or problems and they present options in the form of limited choices letting learners make the final decision rather than telling them what to do.

Facilitators adapt their presentation and pace to the functioning level of learners, encouraging learners to paraphrase their understanding and what they hear from other learners. If during instruction facilitators realize that many participants are not getting it, they will retrace some steps with them before moving forward. They may role-model and ask learners to copy their example, make connections to other instances or other class academia, or reframe and repeat key points. In any case, the facilitator knows when to move on and when to linger on a point.

The facilitator summarizes clearly and frequently making key points and includes points made by learners when appropriate. To apply lesson principles the facilitator will often close by asking for commitments from participants to do something different. The facilitator consistently follows-up on the individual and group commitments and in turn, the learners are taking individual ownership of pro social change.

**Group Facilitation Checklist**

- Avoid telling — offer choices
- Ask open-ended questions to start discussions
- Avoid judging, put-downs and personal jokes — stay factual and brief
- Avoid distancing and diverting — stay in the present and on topic
- Avoid lecturing, probe the group to prompt discovery and allow them to learn through discussion
- Facilitator’s demeanor — engaging, but not acting overly familiar with the learners
- Use tactic re-direction questions before administering consequences
- Facilitator does NOT offer lessons in sequence.
- Facilitator selects appropriate lessons based on the thinking and behavior demonstrated by most of the group members
- Opening ritual — review rules, creed, common ground, review post-it sticky-notes
- Provide variation in teaching — give concrete examples as often as possible, use visuals, use objects and object lessons
- Be non judgmental when asking questions and providing feedback
- Address the thinking patterns, not behavior
- Model what you teach—respect, cooperation, compromise, healthy social behavior
Peer Review of My Tactics

Opening

**Common Ground:** During our time together I will do whatever it takes to offer helpful feedback and learn from the feedback of others.

**Objective:** (Individuals will receive peer pressure, peer help, and peer accountability to stop particular tactics.)

**Instructions**

1. Every other group session select 1 group member that the others will evaluate during the regular course of activities for that session. Make the necessary copies of the handout and pass it out.

2. At the close of each session, ask the individual being evaluated to collect and tally the results by adding up how many of each particular tactic was recorded and to report those results in the next group session.

3. The individual being evaluated should bring a written plan and commitment for eliminating their tactics and should be prepared to read it to the group at the beginning of the next session.

4. For the remainder of the initial group session, you may want to discuss what their motives are for using tactics. What they expect to gain or accomplish?

5. Ask them to discuss what it is that responsible people do to interrupt or prevent themselves from using tactics.

**Optional Role-Play (see guidelines p.9)**

6. Along with the written plan in step # 3 above. The participants can prepare a role-play to demonstrate a scenario where they avoid using tactics. They can use Stay on Track steps from the poster or their Pocket Guide to prepare their role-play. They may need some guidance from you as they prepare. Be sure to review their role-play ideas prior to their presenting to the group. The group should offer feedback on their ideas, not their acting abilities.
Peer Review of My Tactics

Evaluator’s Name: _________________________________________________________

Person being evaluated: ______________________________________ Date:___________

List the number of each tactic you have observed this person using and the circumstance when the tactic was used.