

Session 7

mentoring skills and processes 1 -
problem solving/goal setting/action planning/
managing change

the fostering network
helping children to thrive



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Introduction

Mentoring is about development and growth, which also implies change and transition.

Mentors need to have an understanding of the process of change to be able to effectively help their mentee move forward in their development.

This session, while focusing on the process of change and on developing problem solving skills, also gives mentors tools to help mentees set goals and make realistic action plans based on small manageable steps.

Purpose

Trainee mentors learn experientially about the process of change and practise skills needed to assist the mentee move forward in their development

Application

Once the introductory stage of the mentoring relationship has been worked through, action planning and goal setting are main components and core skills of mentoring. Mentors will be required to help their mentees manage change and solve problems on an ongoing basis throughout the mentoring relationship.

Overview

time:

Total session running time **3 hours10 minutes**

objectives:

By the end of this session you will:

- Have acquired knowledge of techniques used to set SMART goals and develop action plans
- Have identified driving and restraining forces involved in making changes
- Have reflected on your own experience of managing change
- Have creatively depicted your own personal vision for your life

key issues

This session focuses on how people deal with change. For any individual, change can be difficult and threatening, although it can also be exciting, and it is even more so

for someone who has been in care and gone through a lot of experiences, which have felt out of their control.

Recognising how an individual deals with change is very important when it comes to setting achievable goals and developing an action plan with a mentee.

materials

Flipchart stand, pad and marker pens, Blu-Tack

Paper and pens for note taking

Coloured felt tip pens and crayons

OHP slides:

1. Session objectives
2. The mentoring way
3. The Mentoring Process
4. Transition and change
5. Self Talk Cycle
6. SMART Goals
7. Action plan [slides 1 - 5]

Handouts:

1. Session objectives
2. The mentoring way
3. The Mentoring Process
4. Changes handout pack containing the following handouts
 - Change is inevitable
 - Exercise for change 1
 - Exercise for change 2
5. Transition and change
6. Some factors which hinder our growth and development (self talk, comfort zones, habit and routine)
7. Force Field Analysis worksheet
8. Goal setting : Creative methods of responding to challenges
9. Action plan [5 handouts]
10. Home task

Training session

1. Session objectives

5 minutes

This exercise is designed to let everyone know what is going to be covered in this session.

What to do

- Show slide ①. Reveal and talk about each objective, one at a time.
- Ask if anyone has any questions or is unclear about anything.
- Explain that goal setting and action planning with young people who have been in care are most effectively addressed through small manageable steps and involve the willingness/ability to adapt to change.
- Explain that in order to understand the process of change, people will be asked to take part in exercises focusing on their own experiences of change.

2. Ice breaker

10 minutes

This introductory exercise is a light-hearted way of introducing the idea of goal setting.

What to do

- Explain that each person will be asked in turn to state a goal for themselves, which they will try and achieve before the next session.
- Explain that goals needn't necessarily be serious – they could also be light hearted – eg. be back on time from the tea break, find out everyone's star sign. There is an opportunity though for people to commit to something they have been avoiding/not quite got round to.
- Start with yourself and say what your goal is.
- Go round the group until everyone has shared their goal.

3. The mentoring process

15 minutes

Here we look at mentoring as a process and identify the different stages which the mentoring relationship goes through. The importance of setting goals and making an action plan are highlighted in stage 3 of the mentoring process.

what to do

- Show slide ② "the mentoring way" and go through each of the stages in the mentoring process.

- Explain that setting goals and working towards them are integral tasks of stage 3 of the mentoring process
- Show slide ③ that summarises the mentoring process. Explain that the stages identified will form the basis of this session and the following one.

4. Creating a Vision

45 minutes

This exercise gives people a chance to creatively represent what they wish to bring into their lives. This is a crucial first stage in the mentoring process; if there is no vision of life in the future improving as a result of something in it being changed, then there is no motivation to change the way life currently is. The stronger the vision is the more likely it is to sustain the person's motivation through the process of making it a reality.

what to do

- Invite people to creatively depict their vision of how they would like their life to be
- Explain that people can be as creative as they like using the materials provided and tell them that they have 20 minutes for the task
(Beforehand set out paper, paints and brushes, crayons, glitter, glue, magazines and coloured fabric on a table)
- Explain that there is no "right way" of doing this exercise and that it is about having fun and being creative
- After 20 mins ask people to get into small groups of 3-4 people and share their vision with others in the group
(If the whole group is fairly small in number and time allows, it may be preferable to let the sharing of peoples work take place in the whole group)
- Remind people that each element of their vision can form the basis for a more detailed vision in its own right.

Coffee break

15 minutes

5. Managing change

30 minutes

Explain that mentoring focuses both on helping the mentee cope with change and also on helping him/her effect change.

Explain that the next 2 exercises give people the opportunity to look at how they manage change in their own lives so as to be better able to understand the process of change from the mentee's perspective

What to do

- Give everyone a pack containing the following handouts:
 - Change is inevitable
 - Exercise for change 1
 - Exercise for change 2
- Introduce this part of the session by talking about how inevitable change is in everyone's lives.
- Allow people 10 minutes to fill in the worksheets on their own.
- Then ask everyone to get into pairs and discuss their experience of change with their partner.

Trainers' notes:

It is up to each individual to decide if they want to share what the actual changes were, with their partner. The focus of the discussion is more about the process of change, than the events themselves.

- After 10 minutes, ask everyone to come back into the large group.
- Ask everyone to say how they found the exercises and what they learned about the process of making changes.
- Write the examples of learning on a flipsheet
- Show slide ④ "transition and change" and explain that this is a simple model of how we often experience the process of transition and change.
- Explain that young people who have been in care have often experienced significant loss, trauma and chaos in their lives and, for that reason, are likely to find the process of change more difficult to manage
- Make the point that it is important when helping the mentee through a period of transition that mentors responses should reflect what stage the person is at in the process of transition

6. What stops you doing things?

30 minutes

This exercise is designed to get people to understand why they avoid making changes and to assist people to work out strategies to overcome these barriers to change.

What to do

- Explain that a mentor's role is often to help their mentee work towards making a change that they are anxious about.
- Explain that in any change there are both factors which push people towards change as well as factors which hold people back from change. (At this point input on negative self-talk, comfort zones and habits and attitudes can be usefully introduced to the group.) Show slide ⑤

- On a pre-prepared flipsheet show a diagram of Lewin's Force Field analysis and give examples of driving and restraining forces connected with some aspect of change eg starting a new job
- Give out a copy of the handout 'Force Field Analysis Worksheet'
- Ask everyone to select one change that they want to make, but which they keep putting off.
- Ask people to list the driving and restraining forces involved in their desired change on the handout. Key here is the balance between driving and restraining forces. If restraining forces are stronger than we will struggle to change/act. Our goal as mentors is therefore to explore ways of maximising the driving forces and minimising the restraining forces
- Ask everyone to get into pairs and discuss with their partner the reasons why the change needs to take place and what will happen if the change does not take place.
- After 10 minutes ask everyone to return to the large group.
- Ask people how useful they found this technique and whether they intend to use it
- Mention creative ways of approaching challenges and give out handout on Problem Solving Techniques.

7. Goal setting

15 minutes

This exercise is designed to give everyone experience in setting realistic goals in their own lives and teaches the skills to make goals measurable by making them SMART. The exercise also allows people to develop their mentoring skills.

What to do

- Ask each person to take a minute or two to write down one goal that they want to achieve in their lives in the next few months, which will help them move towards their vision.
- Emphasise that the goal should be small, realistic, manageable and within their control.
- Once everyone has finished ask for a few examples of goals, which people have chosen. Some of the goals are likely to be fairly unspecific e.g. lose weight, go on holiday.
- Explain that breaking goals down into specific objectives makes it easier to monitor and assess progress
- Show slide ⑥ "SMART goals" and talk through each point in turn.
- Take one example of a goal that someone has given and make it SMART to give an example of how this process works
- Now ask people to get into pairs and explain that one person will tell their partner their goal while their partner's role is to discuss it with them and help them make it SMART.

- After a few minutes people swap roles so that each person has a turn in each role.
- Bring the whole group back together and invite feedback on whether people felt this exercise was useful in practising goal setting skills necessary for mentoring

8. Action planning **10 minutes**

This outline of a simple action plan can be used as a tool to help people identify and move forward their goals.

What to do

- Show slides of Action plan: slide ⑦ (5 slides in total)
- Talk through the process of thinking up an action plan with someone who is vulnerable.
- Highlight how important it is to break down one goal into small manageable steps.
- Emphasise the importance of steps 4 and 5, which are about reviewing the action plan and note that Session 9 of the training looks at reviewing in more depth.

9. Recap of session **5 minutes**

This helps people reflect on what they have learned and recaps on the session objectives.

What to do

- Show slide ① again.
- Ask everyone if they are happy that each objective has been met.

10. Hometask **5 minutes**

Explain that this session's hometask is in 2 parts:

- Reviewing a personal goal which has been achieved, and
- Setting a personal goal and completing an action plan for working towards it.

11. Looking ahead

Link forward to next session

What to do

- Tell everyone what the next training session will be about.

12. Evaluation of session

10 minutes

What to do

- Give out evaluation sheets and allow 10 minutes for everyone to fill them in.
Make sure you get them all back before everyone leaves!

13. Handouts

Give out session handouts.

By the end of this session you will:

- Have acquired knowledge of techniques used to set SMART goals and develop action plans
- Have identified driving and restraining forces involved in making changes
- Have reflected on your own experience of managing change
- Have creatively depicted your own personal vision for your life

The Mentoring Way

There are four stages in the Mentoring Way.

STAGE 1 - Commitment and Involvement

The mentor's role in this stage is to take the lead. To become committed and involved in mentoring we must understand the positive effect mentoring has on other people and ourselves. To influence people and gain their interest requires the mentor to :

- Gain commitment by showing the mentee the benefits of mentoring and gaining their support for the process
- Getting involved by encouraging others to accept the principles of mentoring
- Getting together with and providing support for the mentee whilst building a mentor/mentee relationship

Getting Involved

The skills for both giving and receiving feedback are fundamental to the success of the mentoring process. If feedback is given effectively it has the effect of making the mentee want to improve and grow and communicates that you value the contribution they have made. The opposite is destructive criticism and this can affect the self-esteem of the mentee. Involvement and commitment are both paramount to the success of the mentoring process.

STAGE 2 - Familiarisation and Understanding

Your role at this point is one of support. This stage is about :

- Setting the agenda and location for the first few meetings
- Establishing ground rules
- Agreeing a personal contract

Getting to know one another

This is an important stage because, as the mentor, you should get to know :

- How the mentee thinks
- How the mentee perceives different situations
- How much they know
- What they wish to achieve from being mentored
- What previous experience they may have

As the relationship between the mentor and the mentee develops, an element of trust is established, and feelings and thoughts expressed freely. This, of course, is a two-way process and as a mentor you can provide the mentee with an insight into your previous experiences and knowledge to encourage openness and participation,

commitment and co-operation. The mentee, is of course, the most important person in the whole process. Active listening is essential here by both parties.

STAGE 3 - Working and Learning Together

Your role here is to coach and facilitate. To assist in the measurement of goals we use a mnemonic SMART. All goals should satisfy certain basic criteria, namely - Smart, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Time focused.

Specific

The purpose should be clear about what you want to achieve. It is handy to write it down and avoid being general.

Measurable

You need to be able to measure progress towards a goal as it is important to know when you have achieved something. That achievement should also be celebrated, no matter how small.

Agreed

It goes without saying that commitment to fulfilling objectives starts from both party's agreement to the objective set.

Realistic

There is nothing so demoralising as to set out objectives, which you cannot see yourself achieving. You should try to break the learning into activities and steps and ensure the expectations of you and your mentee are realistic, to allow you to achieve what you want.

Time Focused

Setting a time frame is a good idea and times should also be realistic.

Learning Together

At this stage the relationship between you and your mentee is based on mutual respect and trust. You as a mentor should be :-

- Someone with whom your mentee can review progress and bounce ideas off
- Introducing your mentee to activities, contacts, longer term objectives etc
- Assisting in clarifying actions you need to take and the reason for these actions
- Assisting in identifying barriers to progress

STAGE 4 - Review and Evaluation

The mentor's role is one of Counsellor, Facilitator and Supporter. The review should look back at the initial purpose and objectives of the mentoring relationship, including the original contract, and review what has actually been achieved.

- What were your mentees objectives ?
- What has been achieved ?
- What problems did they have ?
- What surprises did they have ?
- What have they learned ?

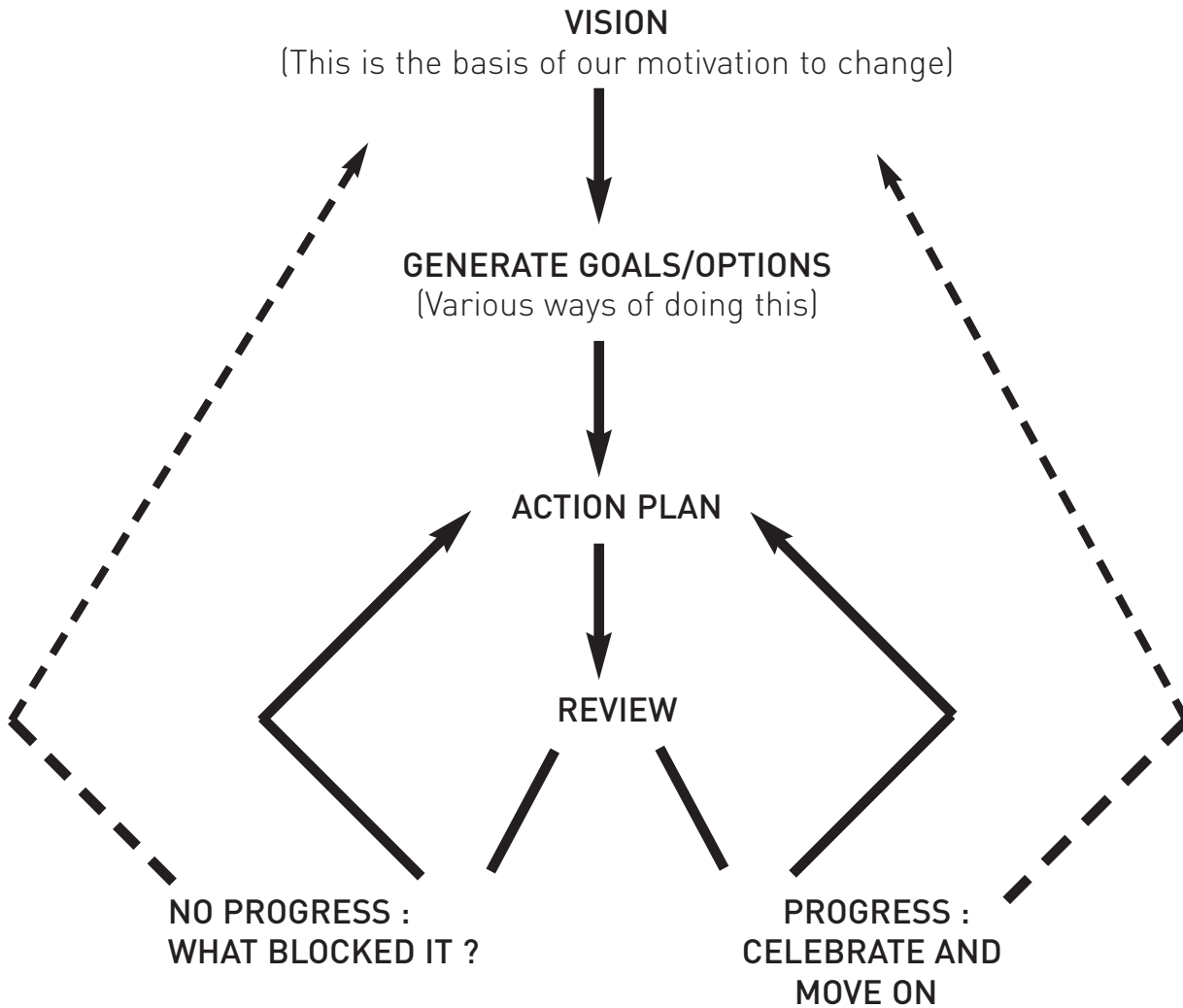
The review process is by no means the end of the personal development process.

After the review look to the future by :-

- Revisiting the Mentoring Contract
- Setting new goals and targets together
- Thinking of where they want to be
- Looking at how they are going to get there
- Looking at the support they need on the way
- Make an action plan together

Stage	Mentor's Role	Objectives	Methods
Stage One Commitment & Involvement	Takes the lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain commitment • Show mentee benefits of mentoring and gain support from them • Provide support for mentee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give attention • Listen • Ask open questions • Agree agenda
Stage Two Familiarisation & Understanding	Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree Personal contract • Set Agenda • Get to know each other • Help mentee explore developmental needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active listening • Clarifying • Understanding
Stage Three Working & Learning Together	Coaching Facilitator	Set goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific • Measurable • Achievable • Realistic • Time Focused • Action plan for next period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing experience • Giving information and advice • Ask open questions
Stage Four Review and evaluation	Counsellor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at goals • What has been achieved ? • Set new goals/ targets • Look at support • Action plan for next period of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative thinking • Problem solving • Monitoring and evaluating • Planning • Making decisions/ arrangements

Adapted from: Matches Mentoring Project (Glasgow Mentoring Network/The Big Step)



- * Was the step too big ? Did it take the person too far out of their comfort zone ?
- * Was the goal "SMART" enough ?
- * Has the person lost sight of the "VISION" ?

change is inevitable

The following exercises aim to demystify and take the fear out of change. This is really important to think about. It's all very well to sit and think, "I want to be different. Things have to change. It's time for a change." But what are the implications of change ?

Many of us are frightened to change because we are afraid of the unknown. This fear can have a crippling effect and hold us back from exciting and thrilling opportunities. The important thing to remember is, whether we are frightened or not, change will happen.

Believe it or not, change is probably the most constant aspect of our lives.

OK, not all change feels good. However, if we can deal with change in a positive way, our lives will be much healthier and happier.

You may feel like you are stuck in a rut and that nothing is changing in your life. What we need to be aware of is that change happens in lots of different ways. Some changes are sudden, like death or redundancy. Some changes are gradual like ageing. All change affects us in one way or another.

Exercise for change 1

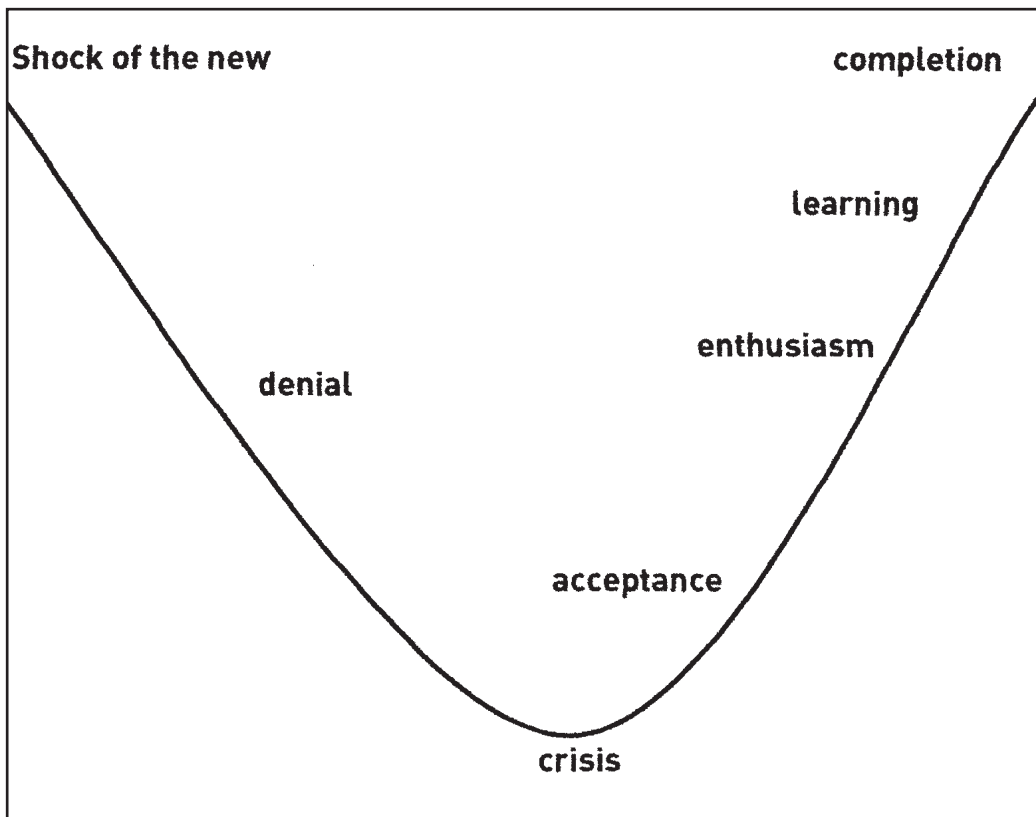
Think about times in your life when change has occurred. Choose one change, which was a good experience.

My good experience of change was :	
Were you responsible for this change ?	
How did you incorporate this change into your life?	
What did you learn about yourself because of this change?	
Are you glad that the change happened?	
Could you have done anything to prevent the change?	
Would you change anything if you could?	
Is there any unfinished business that you need to deal with concerning this change?	
Can you do anything about this now ?	
If you were advising a dear friend, what would you say about the way they dealt with this change ?	

Exercise for change 2

Think about times in your life when change has occurred. Choose one change, which was not a good experience.

My not so good experience of change was:	
Were you responsible for this change ?	
How did you incorporate this change into your life?	
What did you learn about yourself because of this change ?	
Are you glad that the change happened?	
Could you have done anything to prevent the change ?	
Would you change anything if you could?	
Is there any unfinished business that you need to deal with concerning this change?	
Can you do anything about this now?	
If you were advising a dear friend, what would you say about the way they dealt with this change?	



Shock of the new. An event impinges upon us, leaving us feeling immediately disempowered and resourceless.

Denial. This leads us into denying that anything has really changed and we try to go on as normal.

Crisis. Can often be the first stage of acceptance, but feelings of powerlessness and resourcelessness still persist. We may still be mourning some of the things that we felt safe with, but which have now gone forever.

Acceptance. Increasing acceptance of the need for the change and growth in self-confidence. We may still feel a sense of loss, however.

Enthusiasm. An acquisition of a more optimistic vision of the change and increasing focus on the opportunities it gives, rather than on the loss.

Completion. Not only have our circumstances changed, but we also have changed in order to meet them.

Taken from: Depaul Trust "Working Out"



Some factors which hinder our growth and development.

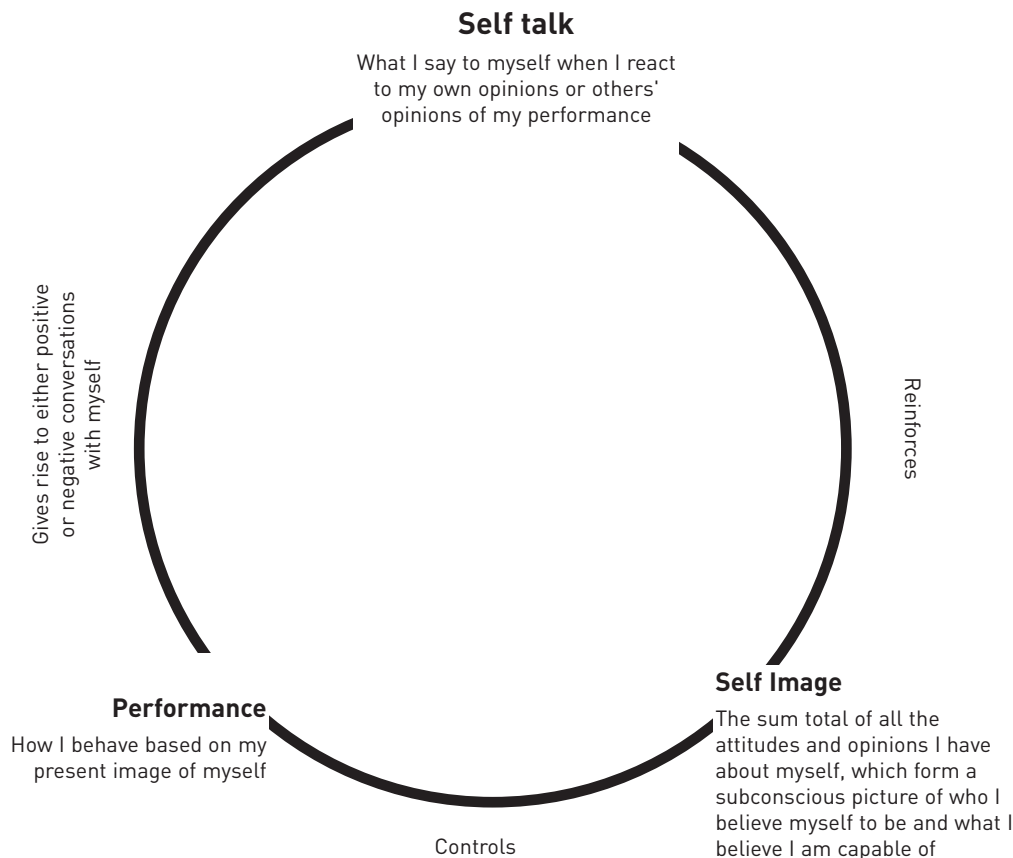
Self-talk

Psychologists teach that all human beings think in three dimensions. We think in words, which trigger pictures, the pictures, very importantly, create emotions. This three-dimensional form of thought is what is called "self-talk".

Self-talk is simply the conversation that each of us is carrying on with ourselves all day long. While you are reading this you are speaking to yourself. It is estimated that about 50,000 thoughts go through our minds each day. Each one of these thoughts is being recorded in the neuron structure of the cells of our brains. They are recorded regardless of whether they relate to something we have actually experienced or something we have visualised.

The impact of self-talk depends on : the frequency or particular discussions, the strength of emotion created, and our image of ourselves.

SELF TALK CYCLE



The opinions of us that we give credibility to, whether positive or negative, have an impact on us. Whose opinions do we listen to ? Why do their opinions matter more to us than the opinions of others ?

Our self-image is not set. We can choose to change it, but it is easier to look for evidence that reinforces our current self-image.

Comfort zones

All of us, at some time or another, feel out of place, uncomfortable. At other times we feel good, at our best and we perform well. Why ? There is a simple answer: we are self-regulated by comfort zones.

Comfort zones correspond with our current self-image in any particular area of our lives. How we perform is determined by our self-image and the comfort zone that matches this picture.

The higher and more positive our self-image the broader and more productive our comfort zones will be.

Moving out of our comfort zones causes anxiety, and a range of physical symptoms, and we do not think or act at our best. Knowing that we are out of place makes us act creatively to get back into that zone where we feel comfortable.

Our comfort zones exist in relation to our current dominant self-image, not what we are capable of.

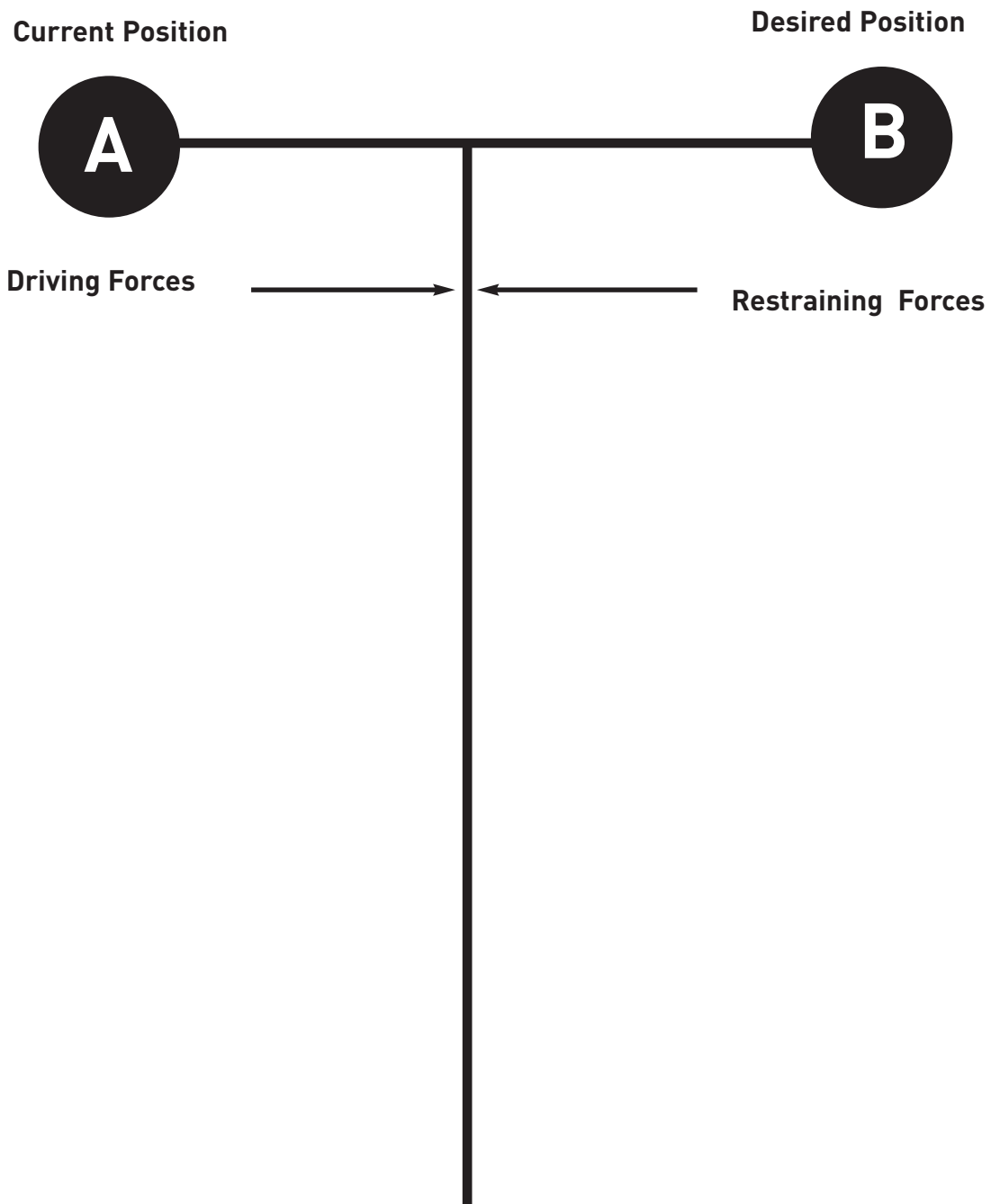
Habits

Habits enable us to save conscious effort by making something "second nature" to us through repeating it to the point where we don't have to think about it anymore. Habits enable us to do complicated things, like driving a car, more easily - but they also have their disadvantages. Once we have acquired a habit, if we are asked to change it, it upsets us. We resent having to acquire new habits.

Adapted from the work of the Pacific Institute

Force Field Analysis Worksheet

Thinking about the course work we have done in this session so far and the problem you have identified for this exercise, list below the driving and restraining forces for change in the appropriate columns below :



Adapted from : Depaul Trust "Working Out!"

Goal setting: creative methods of responding to challenges

All too often, we are limited by our culture and only look for obvious methods of solving issues and responding to challenges. Obvious methods usually involve sitting alone, or around a table with others, attempting to solve a problem using 'conventional' techniques. Conventional techniques involve gathering data, seeking expert advice or simply going for a quick fix to the problem by adopting the solution which is suggested by the most respected or loudest person present. Sometimes this works, sometimes it doesn't.

As adults, we have generally been conditioned to stop using our imaginations, since our culture demands that facts should be the basis of all adult thinking and decision-making. In doing so, we are denying ourselves the ability to use a very powerful tool in solving issues.

In looking only for the obvious solution based on sound facts or known techniques, we are failing to use techniques used by Einstein, Edison, Carnegie and many other successful people to solve problems or to stimulate new ideas or thinking. Each of the above named have gone on record to claim that imagination was as important to them in their achievement of success as scientific fact or research.

Let's not be afraid to daydream. Some of the following techniques may just provide the answer to a challenge/issue you have been grappling with, or which may be waiting around the corner for you.

Quick thinking. Give yourself a time limit, say 5 minutes. Use the time to write as many possible solutions as you can think of on a piece of paper. Don't limit/censor yourself, just write down whatever comes into your mind. Go through what you have written afterwards and pick what you think are the best solutions.

Metaphors. Select an everyday object. Select an issue. Use your imagination to link the two. Say to yourself, "**Problem** is like **object** because" and fill in the blanks by imagining that this is the case. For example, "**communication** is like this **bottle of water** because when the top is on, no water can flow out, but releasing the top allows the water to flow." In making the mind-shift from the usual or the ordinary, creative solutions can spring to mind.

Visioning. This is really daydreaming. In relaxing, and letting your imagination think of what an ideal situation might be, you are creating what Mohammed Ali called a 'future history'. From a very early age, Ali had a future history of himself being crowned heavyweight boxing champion of the world. In his imagination, he could see

himself in the ring, hear the cheers of the crowd, see the flashbulbs of ringside cameras going off, feel the perspiration running off his body etc. etc. In imagining himself in this ideal state, and constantly living this in his mind's eye, he was able to take the necessary action to achieve his dream.

Visualisation. Draw your challenge on a piece of paper describing the situation as you see it, using your imagination. Popular metaphors drawn include animals, cars, famous people etc. On completion of your drawing, invite questions and non-negative comment from other people. The questions asked or comments made cause you to reflect further on the issues and possible solutions.

The Japanese. Take your problem and say to other people. "The Japanese have done (give desired end result). Use your imagination to think of possible ways in which the task has been achieved, or the issue solved, by people from another culture. Can you do the same, or think of ways of getting to the next stage ?

The Expert. Imagine that you have been lucky enough to obtain the world expert (free of charge) to help you to solve your particular issue. What does he/she say ? What advice do you think would be given to you ?

It may be difficult to use techniques to begin with, but they can be effective. Remember that Einstein claimed that his imagination was more important to him than all the books and expertise available to him.

Even if you don't use all the techniques, next time you are caught daydreaming, you can say, "I'm creatively solving all our problems".

Adapted from: Matches Mentoring Project (Glasgow Mentoring Network/The Big Step)

Smart Goals

Slide 6

SPECIFIC

Be clear about what you want to achieve

MEASURABLE

You need to be able to measure the progress you are making towards a goal

ACHIEVABLE

The goal must be one that you can see yourself achieving

REALISTIC

You must have or be able to get the resources needed to achieve the goal

TIME FOCUSED

Set a time frame within which you want to achieve your goal

action plan (1)

Slide 7

What do I want to do? Why do I want to do this?

I would like to be able to :

Because :

This will involve :
(break your aim into
smaller steps)

Difficulties which might
slow me down :

action plan (2)

What do I need to do this?

Skills that I need:

Skills that I already have:

Activities that might be useful:

Resources that I need:

Resources I can already get hold of:

Places I might find other resources:

action plan (3)

How am I going to do this ?

Date	action
8	8
7	7
6	6
5	5
4	4
3	3
2	2
1	1

action plan (4)

How far have I got?	
What is going according to plan?	
What has been unexpected?	
Will anything need to be changed?	
What have I learned?	
What am I still unsure about?	
What do I feel more confident about?	

action plan (5)	
How did my plan work out	
My comments :	
Other comments :	
What next ?	

Hometask for session 7

- 1) Take some time to think of a personal goal, which you have worked towards and achieved in your life – it can be big or small!

Who or what helped motivate you to achieve your goal? How did you feel when you had achieved it?

Jot down some notes on your what your goal was and how you achieved it.

Did you find it difficult to think of a goal you had achieved?

Remember that young people who have been in care often have a poor sense of self-esteem and might well find it very difficult if not impossible to think of anything they feel they have achieved.

- 2) Take some time to think of a goal that you want to achieve (it could be the same goal that you discussed in the SMART objectives experience) or a different one.

Complete Action Plan worksheets 1, 2 & 3

EVALUATION SHEET

1. Rate today's training session by circling one number

Not interesting

Very interesting

1

2

3

4

5

2. How will today's training session help you carry out your role as a mentor?

3. What did you enjoy most about today's training session?

4. Anything you didn't enjoy or didn't feel was useful?

5. Any suggestions to improve this training session when it is next run?

6. Any other comments?

Thank you for completing this form
