**HABIT PLAN**

Developing new healthy habits is an important part of working toward long-term goals. For example, the goal of improving one’s health can’t be achieved without habits such as eating well or exercising. To get started, it helps to create a habit plan.

A habit plan involves connecting a new habit to an existing one, then rewarding the successful completion of the task. The Habit Plan worksheet provides instructions, examples, and a template for clients to create their own plan.

After clients fill out their plan, encourage them to keep it somewhere visible so they are reminded to work on the habit. Check in on their progress during each session, and make adjustments as necessary.

The goal of this handout is to teach the “formula” behind a habit plan. Once the concept is well understood, habit plans can be recorded in a journal, phone, or anywhere else convenient.

**TIPS ON IDENTIFYING PERSONAL HABITS**

To use the power of habit formation to help during recovery, the first step is to identify your personal habits. If your brain is hardwired after habitual use of drugs or alcohol, sometimes just identifying the cue, routine and reward can stimulate change right then and there.

If you’re not sure how to figure out your personal habits, here are some tips:

* Observe yourself and be honest.
* Write the habit down as soon as you recognize it.
* Jot down potential triggers.
* Ask others who know you well if they notice any habitual behaviors.
* After identifying your habit, ask yourself if the outcomes are good or bad.

**HAVING THE WILL POWER OF HEALTHY HABITS IN RECOVERY**

If you can identify the habit loop that led you to form an addiction, you can direct your willpower to change. All it takes is recognizing the initial cue or trigger and substituting a new behavior or habit, which then leads to a new reward. It’s essential that the new habit reaps its own reward so that you’ll soon be craving the outcome produced by your new routine.

To create good habits after addiction and help fight relapse, follow these first steps:

1. Identify the cues: What pushed you toward drug or alcohol use in the past? For example, many people drink as a response to stress.
2. Seek alternative rewards: Find the rewards that will help you crave the new habitual behavior. In the past, you may have used alcohol to unwind after a stressful day. You now need to find a new behavior to relax in the evening.
3. Make a game plan to change: Now that you know your cue or trigger, you can use that as a signal to perform your new habit. Instead of drinking in response to stress, give your sponsor a call and go for a walk, head to the gym or take a bubble bath. Anything to give yourself the desired reward of relaxing.