



## **Rethinking Substance Use on Campus**

*A Three Trees Center for Change Cognitive Behavioral Intervention*

## **Lessons Overview**

1. Introduction and Directions
2. About You
3. Foxes and Chickens
4. Stop Hurting the People You Love
5. Stop Before You Act
6. The Cost of Using
7. Red Flags
8. Drop the Old Habits
9. Thinking Errors
10. Motivation
11. Looking at Tomorrow
12. Think About What You Have Learned

## Lesson One: Introduction and Directions

If you are being asked to complete this Rethinking Substance Use on Campus course, you, like every human being on the planet, have made some mistakes. What this program seeks to do is to help you by providing a better understanding of why you made these choices and what you can do about it. The premise of this course is that people typically know what they should do so what this program seeks to do is to help you understand why we sometimes do something different. Getting in trouble at college can be embarrassing, financially intrusive and creates obstacles for the goals we have set ourselves. This lesson will give you the tools to make the necessary changes in order to be able to overcome these current obstacles and to move forward with your life's goals and dreams.

There are two people who will be involved in your online course. The first is your Course Coach. This is the person from Three Trees Center for Change who will be guiding you through the process. This person is not affiliated with your university except through this program. The second person is your University Official. This is an employee of the school you attend who has asked you to complete this course and will be receiving updates as to your progress as you move through the program. You will be completing this course through this online format. You will work through one lesson at a time and when a lesson is complete your Course Coach will grade the lesson and you will be emailed about whether or not you need to make any corrections. The course is only complete when you have successfully completed all lessons and no longer need to make any corrections. When completing assignments you will need to follow the directions exactly. If it asks you to write four answers and you write three you will need to go back and redo that section. If it asks you to list two people and you list one you would need to redo this section. Make sure you follow all instructions provided if you wish to successfully complete this course. There may be a couple of directions included that are designed to test your ability to follow directions so pay close attention. There will also be a lot of repetition and interweaving of similar concepts for it is only through repetition that we learn new skills and habits.

You may find this course difficult at times as it might challenge values and beliefs that you have held since you were young. Don't worry. This is a part of the change process, and while uncomfortable at times this is necessary for growth and freedom. Typically you will have a time frame in which you need to complete this course, so please check with your University Official to find out how long you have to complete the course. Your University Official will be regularly updated on your progress so that everyone is on the same page as to how you are doing in the course. You should find out from your University Official what the consequences of not completing this course would be before you begin so that you know exactly what you need to do and what will happen if you do not.

Below are some statements about the course. Identify which statements are true and which ones are false. If they are false, please correct them in the space provided. Your corrections must be complete sentences representing the rules as indicated in the introduction.

Questions:

1. Your University Official will have no idea how you are progressing in this program.
2. You don't need to worry about how you answer the questions, you just need to answer them all.
3. You will not have to worry about going back and making corrections if you answer something incorrectly.
4. This course may challenge beliefs that you have held for a very long period of time.
5. You can complete lessons anytime you like as long as you are doing them in order and have been cleared by your course coach to proceed.
6. If you don't complete this course you probably will not have any consequences.
7. You can take as long as you like to complete this course.
8. At the end of the course you will need to confirm completion with your case manager rather than just assuming you have completed
9. If you do not know what to do you should just give up as there is no one available to help you with this online course.
10. List five of the positive things that will happen in your life if you complete this program:
11. After reviewing the rules of this program, how likely are you to be successful in this program and why?
12. What might be some obstacles for you in completing this program?
13. Who is your Course Coach?
14. Who is your University Official?

## Exercise 2 About You

For this lesson we would like to learn more about you and your life on campus. We would like to learn about what motivates you in life. We would like to learn about where you live, who you live with and what you like about your living situation. Our relationships with our families and friends can be incredibly complex. They can be the cause of a lot of our happiness and a lot of our problems in life. They can shape who we are and how we behave. Sometimes we need to get away from certain family members or friends in order to avoid bad influences and temptations. Other times we need to rely on our friends and family in order to get through bad times. It can be very confusing to work out the balance between what we can rely on friends and family for and what we need to make sure we rely on ourselves for. This lesson is designed to help you think about your life and who you live with in order to get a better sense of the strength and obstacles of your living environment. In addition we would like you to start to learn the practice of mindfulness. Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to the present moment. Individuals who have a mindfulness practice tend to have better emotional regulation and stress management skills, all of which will be important for your success in this course and beyond. You can find mindfulness exercises on our website: [threetreescenterforchange.com](http://threetreescenterforchange.com).

### Questions

1. What motivated you to attend the school you attend?
2. What do you hope to do after school is complete?
3. What do you like about the school you attend?
4. What do you struggle with about the school you attend?
5. Describe your living environment (do you live in a dorm, off campus, who with and why)?
6. What do you like about your living situation and the people you live with and why?
7. What do you struggle with about your living situation and why?
8. What would you like to change about where you live and why?
9. What do you do for fun with friends that has not caused any problems for you?
10. What do you do for fun with friends that has got you in trouble?
11. What do you do to make money for your house hold bills and school fees?
12. What are you proud of about your life?
13. What do you wish was different about your life?
14. Are there friends and family members that you need to be careful around and if so with what issues do you need to be careful?
15. Who is the person you most look up to in life and why?
16. If your life had a slogan that represented your values and goals, what would it be, and why?
17. What are three things about you that other people might be surprised to know?
18. Please describe the changes you would have to make in your living situation in order to graduate college successfully without any more problems?

19. What did you find helpful about the mindfulness exercise?
20. What did you find challenging about the mindfulness exercise?

## Exercise 3 Foxes and Chickens

Our behaviors are governed by the things we feel are important to us. However sometimes our behaviors are very different from our stated priorities. For example an individual may say school is very important to them, but at the same time they ignore homework in order to hang out online. In fact in all the years that we have been teaching these classes we have learned that most people have very similar stated priorities. Most people will say that the top 6 things that are most important to them are

1. Family
2. Health
3. Faith
4. Work
5. Friends
6. Freedom

However, not all people support these priorities through their behavior choices and so do not have the things in life that they would like. You may have an individual who says that school is important to him yet his extra-curricular activity is creating obstacles that make his success in school that much more difficult. When we have this conflict of priorities, we have to sit down and really think about what we want. We cannot have it all. We cannot have conflicting priorities that create obstacles in our life. At some point we have to make a commitment to a set of priorities that will help move us towards our goals. Each priority takes a sacrifice. For example if I want to be healthy I have to sacrifice eating fast food that I may really enjoy. As you move forward, continue to think about these conflicting priorities and the decisions and sacrifices you will need to make in order to make your dreams a reality. An easy way to understand priorities is by the example of foxes and chickens, please watch this video about foxes and chickens and then answer the questions below: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xag\\_naH056I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xag_naH056I)

### Questions:

1. What do chickens represent in this exercise?
2. What do foxes represent in this exercise?
3. What are your top 5 chickens?
4. What are some of your most challenging foxes?
5. Have you had a conflict in the types of chickens you have tried to mix in the past and if so what problems has this created in your life?
6. What behavior changes or fences would you need to make in order for your priorities to be evident in your everyday behavior?
7. What sacrifices would you have to make to develop these priorities?
8. How would your life be different if your priorities matched your everyday behavior?
9. It can take a lot of work to change our daily behavior choices, why would this be worth it to you?
10. Who in your life can help you make these changes and how could they help you?

## Exercise 4 Stop Hurting the People you Love

You might realize that you are not the only person impacted by your choices with drugs and alcohol. Sometimes in the process of making decisions that get us in trouble we console ourselves with the thinking error that we are only hurting ourselves (a thinking error is way of looking at life that does not reflect reality). In this lesson we are going to challenge the thinking error that you are not hurting anybody.

You have many friends and family members that are impacted by your choices too. This includes everybody who has a stake in your education. Your time at school is very important to you and your whole support system. This includes everyone who is cheering you on at home, it includes anybody who may be helping you pay for your experience, and it includes all the people you have yet to meet who will benefit from all that you can and will do with the education you receive at school.

By recognizing how your choices impact other people you can start to realize the importance of making better choices. To complete this assignment, you will need to interview 3 family members or close friends or coworkers (some people even include themselves and interview themselves and please feel welcome to do this too). Set up some time with each of them and have a general conversation about your prior choices. It might be a good idea to go to a nice relaxing environment and share a cup of coffee together to make this a meaningful and relationship building interaction. Remember you may hear some uncomfortable truths. When you hear these truths see it as a sign of the strength of the relationship that someone is willing to share these truths with you. Be careful to monitor if you are getting defensive and be ready to de-escalate yourself using the exercises you learned in previous lessons. Please include in the conversation some of the following talking points:

- How have your prior choices impacted this person?
- What does this person wish you would work on when it comes to your decision making?
- What challenges does this person see you handling well?
- What challenges does this person see you needing to work on?
- Why does this person feel you are capable of making these changes?
- What does this person admire about you?

### Questions:

1. Who is the first person you chose, how do you know them and why did you pick them?
2. How have your choices regarding substance use impacted the first person and what were some of the emotions they felt in response to the choices you made?
3. Who is the second person you chose, how do you know them and why did you pick them?
4. How have your choices regarding substance use impacted the second person and what were some of the emotions they felt in response to the choices you made?



5. Who is the third person you chose, how do you know them and why did you pick them?
6. How have your choices regarding substance use impacted the third person and what were some of the emotions they felt in response to the choices you made?
7. As you look at the impact you have made on some of these people lives what are your thoughts and feelings? Please explain in detail.
8. What would need to change in order to have the kind of impact on other people that you would like to have?
9. What do you think you can do to make amends for the ways your choices have impacted these people and how can you make sure that before making amends your efforts would be appropriate and not make others uncomfortable or make the problem worse?
10. Are you in control of your substance use? what evidence is there to support your answer? (we will explore this questions in more detail in a future assignment)?

## Exercise 5 Stop Before You Act

People often think they are very logical individuals and that they make all of their decisions in a very logical manner. However, what we have learned in recent decades is that most people, most of the time are allowing their emotions to make their decisions for them. A lot of people only engage their analytical logic when attempting to explain to themselves or others why they made these decisions. So often the logic only comes in to the picture after the decision is already made.

One of the ways in which we can start making better decisions is to recognize the emotions driving the behavior choice and take a look at the consequences coming from different behavior choices. *We want to act thoughtfully rather than react emotionally.* For those of us who make most of our decisions based on our emotions, this can take a lot of practice. Here is a basic decision making model that can be helpful called the ABC model.

**A** stands for Activating Emotion, which means the feeling that triggered the desire to make a behavior choice.

**B** stands for Behavior Choice.

**C** stands for the Consequences of the behavior choice.

Let's look at an example of how this works on a basic level.

Imagine a song comes on the radio that you have previously really enjoyed listening to and drinking while down at your local bar. The **activating emotions** of excitement and happiness you feel can lead you to make the **behavior choice** of opening a beer or two or three, even though you have lots of studying left to do. The **consequences** of this can be homework not getting done and increased stress. However if we flip the model around and base our behavior choice decisions not on the activating emotion, but rather on the consequences they will bring then we tend to make more productive behavior choices.

So if the consequence we want is to do a good job on the upcoming test and being able to relax afterwards we can instruct ourselves to ignore the activating emotion of wanting to drink and instead focus on the activating emotion of being successful in our studies to motivate the behavior choice of studying more.

Once we start getting into the pattern of seeing that we have behavior choices in reaction to our emotions we can start making different decisions and thus receiving different consequences. Please remember that as the intensity of the emotion increases our ability to look into the future decreases. Sometimes before we pick a behavior choice we have to first stabilize ourselves by slowing down (future lessons will help with this). As we slow down, our ability to look into the future for potential consequences increases. Practice this process of stopping when you feel an emotion, assessing the

consequence you want and picking the right behavior to get yourself the life you want. Answer the questions below to test this out.

**Questions:**

1. In the past what types of emotions have led to poor decision making on your part?
2. What kinds of emotions have helped you to make decisions that are more helpful to your life and your goals?
3. What people have helped you to make decisions that have been harmful to your life and how?
4. What people have helped you make decisions that were healthier for your life and how?
5. Is there a pattern in the types of places you often make decisions that are harmful and what can you do about this?
6. Is there a pattern in the types of places where you often make healthy decisions and how can you use this information to build a pattern of healthy decision making?
7. Do you find there are certain activities that you engage in that often lead to poor decision making and if so what types of activities are these?
8. Do you find there are certain activities that you engage in that often lead to effective decision making and if so what types of activities are these?
9. What does it help to remind yourself in order to promote decision making that will support your goals in life?
10. Who are some of the people that you would like to make proud in life?
11. What would it take to make these people proud (if you are not sure just ask them)?
12. What types of decisions would you need to make over the next year to make you proud of yourself 1 year from now?

## Exercise 6: The Cost of Using

People often phrase the questions of whether or not they have an issue with drugs and alcohol in a very binary way. They often think of themselves as either having a problem or not having a problem. This binary process is not very helpful as everyone knows people whose use has impacted their lives more than their own. We recommend that people start to develop a spectrum view of their drug use and the problems it has caused.

1. No use: This step is very simple, you have never used.
2. Experimental use: this is where you have experimented with a drug or using alcohol and decided it is not for you. Despite what we often hear you can not be experimenting each weekend, the experiment is over. If you have used more than twice you have decided you enjoy the use and have moved on from the experimental phase.
3. Social Use: This is where you do not really enjoy using but you use at socially appropriate events such as weddings. You do not use for any kind of change in mental status.
4. Recreational Use. This is where you use the drugs or alcohol in a pro-social way because you enjoy the effects of the drug or alcohol but you have never experienced any problems in your social, personal, legal, vocational or financial life connected to your substance use.
5. Problem Use. This level of use is similar to recreational use but you have experienced problems in your social, personal, legal, vocational or financial life and you realize you have to make some changes and set some boundaries in order to fix these issues and prevent them from coming up again.
6. Substance Abuse: This level of use is where you experience some of the other problems but continue your use and start moving down slippery slope where things in life start to revolve more and more around substance use. Your level of honesty may be impacted, your social group may change to support your use, you may be experiencing legal problems related to your use but yet you continue using.
7. Substance Dependence: At this level the drug use has become your number one priority above and beyond honesty, family, friends, jobs, school, finances, personal values and physical health.

As we said before we **don't** often think about substance use in this level based approach. Often times when we think about our own substance use we think in terms of black and white, such as do I have a problem or don't I? This binary approach can be misleading and unskillful and lead to poor choices. Substance use and abuse exists on a spectrum and understanding this spectrum helps us more accurately determine how our substance use is impacting our freedom. A more skillful approach to understanding your substance use is to look at the number of problems that it has created in your life. Instead of asking yourself "do I have a problem?" You could try asking yourself "what problems has substance use created or accelerated in my life?" By attaching your substance use to the types of problems you have experienced in life you can get a better sense of how your life freedom is being impacted by your substance use choices. Answer the following questions to get a better sense of where you might be on the

substance use spectrum. As you answer the following questions please be aware that we are considering alcohol as a drug and so include this in your answers.

Questions:

1. What drug have you enjoyed using the most?
2. How old were you when you first experimented with this drug?
3. How many times a day or week were you using this drug when you were using this drug the most?
4. When was the last time you used this drug?
5. Has your use in anyway impacted your school life?
6. What legal problems has this drug caused you either directly or indirectly?
7. Has anyone in your family ever had concerns about your drug use and if so what were their concerns?
8. Have any of your boyfriends / girlfriends or spouses ever been concerned about your drug use and if so why?
9. In what ways has your drug use impacted your work life? For example have you missed days of work due to drug use? did it cause you to show up late? Have you missed out on job opportunities because of not being able to pass a drug test on the employment screening?
10. Have you ever regretted the way you treated others while under the influence?
11. Did you make decisions that were "outside of your personality" while you were under the influence?
12. How much money have you spent on your drug use, including purchasing the drug, court fees, treatment fees, lost wages etc?
13. What are 5 ways your life would be different if you had never used this drug?
14. What do you think you enjoyed most about your drug use?
15. What do you think you enjoyed least about your drug use?
16. What are the top 5 reasons you have for changing your drug use?
17. As you look at the different levels in the description above, where would you place yourself? Please explain and provide evidence for your answer.

## Exercise 7: Red Flags!

When you make bad choices in life, it does not happen all of a sudden. More often than not, there are warnings letting us know we are about to be put into a bad situation that could result in a poor choice on our part. Think about a mountain road that has a sign on it. The sign tells you to slow down as there is a curve ahead. This sign is what we could call a red flag. If you ignore the sign you will approach the curve at too fast a speed and be out of control turning your life over to chance. This what we call a risky situation. We have at this point lost control of the outcome and may have created a huge problem in our life by not responding to the red flag.

Luckily, there is a way to prevent this. You can avoid problems created by poor decision making by watching out for red flags and changing your behavior when you see them to avoid risky situations and thus having a lot more control over whether or not you experience problems. Red flags are warning signs that trouble may be ahead, and risky situations are what you find yourself in when you ignore the red flags. They tend to fall into 4 categories: (1) Physical sensations, (2) People, (3) situations and (4) emotions.

Physical sensation red flags can be physical sensation associated with craving a substance or the way the body responds to excitement that then makes bad decision making more likely. When we pay careful attention we can notice these physical sensations and remind ourselves that perhaps we are moving towards unhealthy decision making without even knowing it and that perhaps it would be good to start slowing down our breathing or removing ourselves from the situation before the opportunity for a poor decision arises.

People red flags can be individuals in our life who support poor decision making on our part as they do not have to pay the price for it. There are a lot of people who are not overly concerned about what happens to us, but rather are very focused on having fun and having people join them in whatever activities they consider fun. Once we have identified these people we can limit the time and the space we share with them. When we find that we need to spend both time and space with them we can prepare ourselves appropriately and also set limits on the amount of time and space and come up with exit strategies.

Situational red flags are situations that regularly pop up in our life and that put us at risk for poor decision making. Situations could include completing finals for the semester, certain nights of the week when substance use has become a tradition or certain types of parties that increase your likelihood of using.

An emotional red flag could be boredom that often turns into wanting to look for an increase in excitement. Each of us have emotional patterns that we experience. For some of us there are certain emotions that are always present right before trouble comes around. One client talked about as soon as he felt the need to celebrate he had to be careful as this emotion would lead to him wanting to get high with others. He had

to learn how to slow down when he had something to celebrate and then plan accordingly.

By becoming more aware of each of these categories and red flags in and of themselves we can develop an early warning system for conflict that helps us navigate it much more smoothly. Another thing we can do is to continue developing our mindfulness practice in order to help us manage our emotional red flags.

**Questions:**

1. What are the top 3 physical red flags for you when it comes to making bad decisions and what is a good response on your part to each of them?
2. What are the top 3 People red flags for you when it comes to making bad decisions and what is a good response on your part to each of them?
3. What are the top 3 situational red flags for you when it comes to making bad decisions and what is a good response on your part to each of them?
4. What are your top 3 emotional red flags for you when it comes to making bad decisions and what is a good response on your part to each of them?
5. Do you think you ignored red flags in the past and if so why?
6. How do you think ignoring red flags led to you having to take this class today?
7. What could you have done differently if you had spotted the red flags that would have prevented this class from happening?
8. What are 3 daily habits you need to engage in that will make you more aware of red flags and risky situations?
9. How did the mindfulness exercise feel?
10. Did you find your emotional state changing and if so how?
11. Do you feel this would make managing red flags easier or more challenging?
12. What were the last 3 words at the end of the guided meditation?

## Exercise 8: Drop the Old Habits

In addition to changing how we think, it is very important that we change our daily habits. Our day to day habits are the reason that some people reach their dreams while others never seem to get a start at following them. For example one baseball pro who was interviewed in a newspaper stated that since a young age he has been playing and practicing baseball for hours each day. He knew from an early age that he really enjoyed this sport and the more he made the sport a daily habit the better he got at it. He is now making a good living and doing what he loves because of these habits.

On a sadder note an individual we worked with had started the habit during college of drinking on Saturday nights. He said this habit then developed into Friday and Saturday night, then Thursday, Friday and Saturday night and on and on till most of his week was filled up with binge drinking. Any time we develop a new habit we have to sacrifice an old habit. For him, his studying and exercising started to give way to his increased drinking and before he knew it he was struggling with his grades, was on academic probation and heading towards dropping out of school.

When you attempt to change habits it is very difficult as habits are very important to the way that the human brain behaves. Habits are the brain's shortcuts and so whenever we develop habits we save the brain energy. Because of this the brain makes these behaviors default behaviors that it starts to use again and again in order to increase the brain's efficiency. This is represented in the fact that about 95% of our daily behaviors are habit based, or automatic, and that we really only think about 5% of our daily behaviors. Now if you have good daily habits this is great as you are likely to maintain them without any thought. However, if you have developed some bad habits this is going to be a **challenge** as you are going to have to put in a lot of hard work to move the brain off the tracks it has been running on and push it into learning new behaviors and new habits that over time will also become automatic.

Remember that at first these habits are going to feel uncomfortable because the human brain does not like change and is programmed to repeat patterns so any time you try to break these patterns your brain is going to resist. To break through this resistance you must keep focused on the importance of making these changes. Also remember that when you change your habits you only have so much time and energy in your day so you are going to have to sacrifice other parts of your life. This, however, can be a positive.

The energy required to make these changes is so high that most people when attempting change often fall back into old behaviors and then justify why they are not making the changes they know they need to make in their life. This is called relapse. Be careful with relapse as this too can become a habit. Examples of this are people waiting till a new week to begin a new behavior or if they relapse they decided just to go all in as they have already made a mistake.



**Questions:**

1. Think about daily behaviors you have had to change in the past and write down any success you have had at changing daily habits before.
2. What are some of your own personal strengths that make changing habits less challenging for you?
3. Below please list your top 5 bad habits, or daily behaviors that got you into trouble with your school.
4. What are the consequences of these habits in your life?
5. What are 5 goals you have for the next year of your life?
6. What is one habit or daily behavior you will need for each of these goals to make it a reality?
7. Why is it important to you to achieve these goals? Please explain your answer thoroughly?
8. What will be the biggest obstacles (people, places, things, thinking patterns, emotions) to you changing these habits?
9. How will you combat these obstacles? Please be detailed.
10. If you change your habits what will you have to sacrifice in your life (are their friends, activities, or things you enjoy about life that you may have to give up to get what you want)?

## Exercise 9: Thinking Errors

Many of our decisions are made based on faulty beliefs such as “I will not get caught.” Because these beliefs are not accurate, they prevent us from making decisions that move our life forward. It is like using glasses that have lenses that are fogged up, preventing us from seeing things clearly.

One of the students we worked with a number of years ago was able to express that she struggled with a number of thinking errors regarding her decision making while in college. The thinking errors she used are very common. They included (1) I won't get caught, (2) I won't get caught again (3) I am not hurting anybody but myself, (4) I don't agree with this law so I don't need to follow it and (5) I am young and everybody makes mistakes so it's no big deal.

This student was able to break each of these thinking errors apart to see the effect they were having on her life and she realized that thinking she would not get caught and then once she was caught thinking she would not get caught again prevented her from thinking about what might happen if she did get caught. She realized that convincing herself that she would not get caught was a type of denial preventing her from having to think about the consequences she might have to deal with if she did get caught.

She started to see that even though she had convinced herself that she was only hurting herself that her choices impacted a lot of other people including her family and others who were excited about her school experience. She also realized that hurting her own future is a bigger deal than she originally thought it was. She did not originally see this as a type of self harm but once she saw it in this light she realized she did not want to hurt her future opportunities or risk her academic status.

We then started to get her to challenge this idea that not agreeing with the rules or laws means you do not have to follow them. We helped her understand that the only reason you should be breaking rules is if you are comfortable with the consequences of breaking those rules. Not believing in the rules does not protect you from the consequences of not following them. She then realized too that the consequences of not following these rules would prevent her from engaging in the type of social change she hoped to work on in her community.

Lastly she realized that even though she was young now that she was in college she was no longer being treated as a child who would be given lots and lots of chances and support. She realized that school was expecting her to be more mature and to take responsibility for her actions and that her chances were running out.

We develop these thinking errors for a number of reasons: 1) bad information from friends or family 2) false confidence due to not yet having experienced consequences for our decisions or 3) a refusal to deal with reality as it is.

To free ourselves from problems we have to free ourselves from our thinking errors. Below are some thinking errors for you to think about and then revise by writing a more accurate statement. Here is an example:

*Thinking Error: I will not get caught.*

*Replacement: If I am in this program, I have proof that I will get caught. Even if I have gotten away with it more times than I have been caught, it only takes getting caught once for me to lose my freedom.*

**Questions:** (for this first part put the replacement for each thinking error. For the second part please answer the questions in the space provided)

Thinking Error 1: I am special and therefore I don't have to follow the rules like everybody else.

Replacement:

Thinking Error 2: I am in trouble because the whole world is against me.

Replacement:

Thinking Error 3: These rules make no sense, so I don't think I should have to follow them.

Replacement:

Thinking Error 4: My School is out to get me.

Replacement:

Thinking Error 5: My drug use is hurting no one.

Replacement:

Thinking Error 6: Everybody else seems to be able to do these things without getting in trouble, why can't I?

Replacement:

Thinking Error 7: It's not like I have a problem with substance use.

Replacement:

Thinking Error 9: I can't win for losing.

Replacement:

Questions

1. What are the 3 thinking errors that you have used most?
2. What consequences have these thinking errors cost you in your life?
3. What would be a more effective replacement for each of these thinking errors?

## Exercise 10: Motivation

It takes a lot of motivation to make the changes that this course is asking you to make. In the space below I would like you to write an essay that includes the following points:

1. What you did that got you into trouble
2. What it has cost you in terms of finances, relationship problems with friends and family, time, legal issues, school problems.
3. Based on previous assignments that you have completed in this course why you think you made the decisions that you did?
4. What changes are you making in order to prevent this from happening again?
5. Who or what are the biggest motivational factors to make you want to make and maintain these changes?
6. What would be the consequences if you were to get into trouble again?
7. Who are some people in your life that you can always turn to for good advice and support as you try to maintain these changes in your life?
8. What will be the biggest obstacles for you on this path and how will you respond to them?
9. What are you most proud of about yourself and the positive decisions you have made in life?
10. Any other thoughts or feelings related to the path of change that you are on.
11. What stage of change are you in right now regarding substance use on campus?
12. What will you need to start doing to move up to the next stage of change?

## Exercise 11: Looking at Tomorrow

Sometimes we act for the moment, rather than thinking about the next moment or the next day, never mind the next month or the next year. This is not always a bad thing. But when we make decisions that enhance the moment but create problems for us later in life, we can become self-destructive. Take John for example. He was attending an ivy league school and doing well. One night he consumed alcohol and received a ticket from his university police for being underage with alcohol. He had to take some classes and do some community service in response to this ticket. He became frustrated as his friends who had never been cited continued to use. He eventually gave into this frustration and started back to drinking with them. This continued for a while without issue. He eventually got cited again and due to his prior citation now had to enter a diversion program at his local prosecutors office that cost him a lot of money and time and trips to treatment and community service. He had to balance all this with his work and athletic schedule and ended up having a lot of challenges in completing his school year successfully.

We all act impulsively from time to time. But it is important that we do not do so at the cost of tomorrow. The ways people prevent this from happening vary, but many people find the following coping skills helpful for impulse control.

### **A. Play the Tape Through**

Anytime you are about to make a choice, play all options through to the end of the tape. Make sure you are aware of all the consequences that could come from your decision and that you are comfortable with each of these consequences. Remember the thinking errors from a previous exercise that will want you to ignore the reality of these potential consequences.

### **B. Explore the Impact on Others**

Take a look at everyone in the situation that you care about to see how it impacts them. If you were to get kicked out of school who else would this hurt?

### **C. What would I do if the person I admire most was with me?**

Imagine that the person you admire most in life were with you 24/7. If this were true, would you make the same decision? If not, why not?

Read the situations below and explain A. What would be the likely consequences if you follow through on the bad choice B. How these consequences would impact people other than you and C. What you would do if the person you were admiring most were with you. D. What you could do that would be helpful.

1. Your old friends call you to hang out and you know if you head over to where they are at you will be tempted to fall back into old behaviors.

A.

B.

- C.
- D.

2. You have just finished finals for the year and want to celebrate by going out with some friends and getting drunk.

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.

3. You don't feel like following the rules and boundaries that your school has given you anymore.

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.

4. You have finished all the requirements of your schools program for getting into trouble for using on campus and you feel like you are now in the clear to go back to using.

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.

5. You start feeling depressed and start thinking that nobody really cares about you. This leads you to thinking that it does not really matter what you do as you do not care about the consequences.

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.

6. You are around friends that are engaging in behavior that got you into trouble and they are starting to put pressure on you to join them in this behavior.

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.

## **Exercise 12**

### **Think About What You Have Learned**

Congrats you have completed 11 out of 12 assignments and only have one to go! Before you complete this assignment make sure you have completed all the others and they have been checked by your course coach. Just by reaching this point you have demonstrated your ability to make positive change happen in your life. To finish up all you need to do is complete the following questions and then receive confirmation from your course coach and university official that you are complete.

1. What was the problem that brought you into this class?
2. What are the chances of you getting into further trouble?
3. What have you gained as a consequence of completing this class?
4. Are you thinking differently after completing this course, and if so, how?
5. Which part of the course was the most helpful for you, and why?
6. Which part of the course was the least helpful, and why?
7. What are three words that describe your life the day you made the mistake that brought you into this program?
8. What are three words that describe your life today?
9. What are three words that you hope will describe your life one year from now?
10. If you have taken in person classes before how did this online course compare?