



# **SMART Recovery**<sup>®</sup>

Self-Management and Recovery Training

A secular, self-help, abstinence- and science-based support group for those who wish to develop rational skills and gain independence from addictive behavior.

## **SMART Recovery**<sup>®</sup> New England

### **Start at SMART Newcomer's Guide**

SMART Recovery meetings are open to all who are interested. SMART Recovery is based on well-known areas of psychology including the principles of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT). Through discussion and support, participants can learn the skills to change addictive behaviors, avoid relapses, and live a balanced life.

**For additional information, resources, and meeting times visit:**

New England: [www.smartne.org](http://www.smartne.org)

National and Worldwide: [www.smartrecovery.org](http://www.smartrecovery.org)

SMART Recovery<sup>®</sup> is a not-for-profit self-help group with a global presence on 6 of 7 continents. SMART's USA headquarters is located at; 7304 Mentor Ave., Suite F, Mentor, OH 44060, toll free 866-951-5357.

Welcome to SMART. This handout contains materials to introduce you to the SMART Recovery® program in New England.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Just what is SMART? SMART stands for Self Management And Recovery Training. SMART Recovery® helps individuals gain independence from addiction. It is an abstinence-based, not-for-profit self-help mutual support group for people dealing with any sort of addictive behavior. It is secular (non-religious), science-based, and derived from well-known areas of psychology. It is an international organization with meetings on 6 of the 7 continents. Here in New England it is particularly active with a large selection of meetings to choose from.

The SMART program has 4 points of focus:

1. Enhancing and maintaining motivation to abstain (to change and have a better life)
2. Coping with urges (preventing them, coping with them, and dealing with issues if relapse results)
3. Problem solving (by managing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors)
4. Gaining better lifestyle balance (by learning to live without your problem)

We call this the SMART Recovery **4-Point Program**®. These four points are not steps as in a 12-step group.

The SMART program includes many tools and techniques at each point in the program to help you change your life from one that is self-destructive to one that is constructive and satisfying. We teach you how to use self-help tools designed to empower you to develop a more positive lifestyle. We'll introduce some of these tools in this handout. First, let's give you an overview of the thinking behind SMART.

## 2. THE THINKING BEHIND SMART

### *A Rationale for Abstinence*

SMART is an abstinence-based program. You might have asked yourself at some point: Do I really need to abstain?

What you do is your decision, but abstinence is our policy for a very good reason: moderation just doesn't work for most people, especially at the beginning. So we urge you to try abstinence at least for a period of time.

Here are some reasons why you might prefer abstinence as a goal, and why experts often recommend it:

- It's simple: no counting, simple and precise decisions, and good for all situations.
- No guaranteed safe level of drinking/using exists for all people.
- A history of severe alcohol related problems and/or dependence may suggest it.
- Strong external demands to abstain come from courts, family, employer, and others.
- Many medical conditions contra-indicate any use.
- Many psychological or psychiatric problems are made worse by any using.
- Some medications are hazardous in combination with alcohol or other drugs.
- Some medications are ineffective in combination with alcohol or other drugs.

Also, a significant period of abstinence can:

- Allow you to find out what it's like and how you feel without mood altering substances.
- Allow you to learn how you have become dependent on mood altering substances.
- Help you break other old habits.
- Allow you to experience a change and build some confidence.

## ***SMART is Based on Current Self-Help Theory***

Addictive behavior can serve a purpose: to cope with life's problems and emotional upsets. However, many problems arise from heavy drinking, drug using, gambling, overeating and other excesses. To help reverse your self-destructive behavior, we use cognitive-behavioral (thinking/doing) psychotherapy called REBT. Psychologist Albert Ellis devised this system in the 1950s. According to REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy), thinking creates your feelings and leads you to act. By changing the beliefs and emotions that lead you to continue an addictive activity, you can empower yourself to quit. Then you can work at problems you have with abstaining. We are not concerned with the past, except to learn from it. We focus on present-day events and causes of self-destructive behaviors. We concentrate on what to do about them in order to achieve a positive lifestyle change.

### **Your Motives and Your Goals**

Motivation is a key element in nearly all you do. Consider this: we all have two primary goals: 1) **survival** and 2) **happiness**. Your substance of choice at first might not have interfered with your survival, and actually might have increased your happiness at least in the short term. But now, both survival and happiness are in jeopardy but you still are finding it difficult to stop your addictive behavior! Why is that so? You can increase awareness of your motives for your addictive behavior with the help of SMART. You can also increase your awareness of your reasons for quitting. Then you will feel better about changing your behavior. We will help show you how.

### **Your Beliefs**

What you believe about your addiction is important, and there are many ideas being tossed around the field about addiction and recovery. You may believe, for example, that you have an incurable disease, that you have a genetic defect, that you're powerless or that after the first drink you have to lose all control. "I've tried and failed, so I can't do it. I need alcohol to cope." or "Because I've tried to quit and failed, I'm no good." Those beliefs may be true or false. We will help you to decide if your beliefs are helpful or un-helpful for you personally.

### **Your Emotions**

Emotions are important too. People often use addictive behavior to cope with their emotional problems including anger, guilt, anxiety, frustration, and low self-esteem. We teach you how to diminish your emotional upsets in new ways and increase self-acceptance. You will then have greater motivation and ability to remain abstinent and to live more happily.

### **Your Behaviors**

Changes in thinking and emotions are not enough. Commitment and follow-through and changes in behavior are essential. We encourage participants to work at problems, and to become involved in enjoyable activities in place of their addictive activities.

### **How Help Is Provided in SMART Meetings**

Our meeting format is straightforward and organized. Our leaders are trained for the job. Some of them have had personal experience with addiction. We offer both a mental health and educational program. We're concerned with changing human behavior. Group meetings are serious but often fun. We don't spend a great deal of time on the past about which you can do nothing. We work on the present and the future. We discuss our problems with addictive activities and our difficulties in recovery.

### **Saying Goodbye**

The length of time an individual will derive help from our meetings is variable. For some participants, there will come a time when attending our meetings is more in conflict with the pursuit of their life goals than in concert with the enhancement of them. Although these participants will always be welcome back to meetings, this conflict signals that the time has come for saying "Mission Accomplished" and to move on.

### 3. GETTING STARTED

The SMART program includes many tools and techniques at each point in the program to help you change your life from one that is self-destructive to one that is constructive and satisfying. We teach you how to use self-help tools designed to empower you to develop a more positive lifestyle.

When you first come to a SMART Recovery meeting you will get a nice [virtual] toolbox that, as you work through the program, you can fill with various tools to help you in your recovery. You can take these with you and practice them at home between meetings.

#### *Your Toolbox*

Here is your virtual toolbox. Look for this toolbox image throughout this handout to find a SMART tool.



We won't include all of the SMART tools in this handout, but we are going to illustrate some key ones to get you started. Let's start filling up your toolbox right away. Please read on.

#### DO I REALLY HAVE A PROBLEM?

##### The CAGE assessment tool

When you first read this handout, you may wonder if you even have a problem. There are several assessment tools used in the addiction field to help assess whether you might have a problem. An easy one is the CAGE questionnaire below that has you answer 4 simple yes/no questions.



#### **THE TOOL: The CAGE Questionnaire**

EFFECTIVELY USED FOR WHICH OF THE 4 POINTS?

**Building Motivation**    Coping with Urges    Problem Solving    Lifestyle Balance

1. Have you ever felt you should Cut down on your drinking?
2. Have people Annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt bad or Guilty about your drinking?
4. Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover (Eye-opener)?

If you answered yes to even one of these, you may have a problem. With two or more, it's even more likely that you have a problem and you might like to come to a meeting and learn more. There is no commitment to anything, and a 90 minute investment in a SMART meeting now might save your life.

#### The Stages of Change

Now maybe you have decided that making a change is desirable. With that, it is often helpful to see where you are in the process of recovery. Recovery is all about change and it has been worked out that change occurs in a cycle. Further, where you are in the cycle makes a difference as to what might be most helpful to you to move forward in, and then eventually out of, the cycle. Use the following tool to understand the stages of change and to figure out where you might currently be in the change cycle:

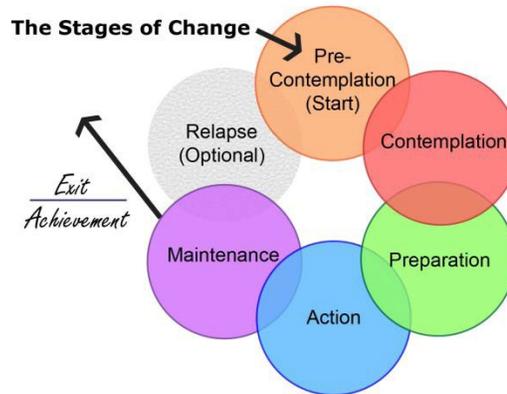
The Stages of Change tool

**THE TOOL: The Stages of Change**  
**Where Are You Currently In the Change Cycle?**

EFFECTIVELY USED FOR WHICH OF THE 4 POINTS?

- Building Motivation**    Coping with Urges    Problem Solving    Lifestyle Balance

There are six (6) stages of change. Where are you currently in the change cycle?



**Stage 1: PRE-CONTEMPLATION**

**The following is a description of a person in the PRE-CONTEMPLATION stage of change:**

Unaware of problems associated with behavior. Certain that the positives of the behavior outweigh the negatives. Not interested in change. Unwilling to change. No intention to change.

**Keywords: Unaware; Resistant.**

At this stage, you may not recognize a problem requiring change or might not consider change worth the bother. You might be attending a SMART meeting because of some coercion. However for you, just sitting in and listening can be helpful, and you may discover that change is not so difficult and can be rewarding.

**Stage 2: CONTEMPLATION**

**The following is a description of a person in the CONTEMPLATION stage of change:**

Becomes aware of problems associated with behavior. Ambivalent regarding positives and negatives. Explores the potential to change. Desires to change behavior but lacks confidence and commitment. Intends to change before 6 months. Concludes that the negatives of the behavior outweigh the positives and chooses to change behavior.

**Keywords: Awareness; Openness; Decision; Commitment; Honesty; Acceptance.**

At this stage, you are weighing out the pros and cons of change and might experience a struggle with the ambivalence people normally feel toward making changes. Writing out the pros and cons in a Cost Benefit Analysis (below) and reviewing it regularly can help you tip the scales in favor of choosing to make changes.

**Stage 3: PREPARATION**

**The following is a description of a person in the PREPARATION stage of change:**

Accepts responsibility to change behavior. Evaluates and selects techniques for changing behavior. Develops a plan. Builds confidence and commitment. Intends to change within one month.

**Keywords: Anticipation; Willingness; Commitment; Planning.**

At this stage, you are ready to make decisions and plans, and you strengthen your commitment to change. Completing the The Change Plan worksheet (below) and investigating recovery options can prove useful. You might also want to seek out help to make decisions on recovery options and arrangements.

#### Stage 4: ACTION

**The following is a description of a person in the ACTION stage of change:**

Engages in a self-directed behavior change effort. Gains new insights and develops new skills.

Consciously chooses new behavior. Learns to overcome the tendencies for unwanted behavior. Active in action stage for less than six months.

**Keywords: Enthusiasm; Momentum.**

During the action stage, you might work on your own or with the help of groups (like SMART Recovery), or you might seek out counselors and other sources of professional guidance as you try out new ways of handling old situations. Some people may feel the need for the controlled environment of inpatient or residential treatment. The tools and readings that may prove helpful at this stage of change depend on what problems you encounter.

#### Stage 5: MAINTENANCE

**The following is a description of a person in the MAINTENANCE stage of change:**

Masters the ability to sustain new behavior with minimum effort. Establishes desired new behavior patterns and self-control. Remains alert to high-risk situations. Focus is on lapse prevention. Has changed behavior for six months.

**Keywords: Perseverance; Consolidation.**

After maybe 3-6 months, you have changed your behavior and might now be seeking practical strategies and social support to maintain your gains. Reading the “Relapse Prevention Strategies” available on the SMART website [www.smartrecovery.org/resources/toolchest.htm](http://www.smartrecovery.org/resources/toolchest.htm) and using these strategies may be helpful.

#### Stage 6: EXIT / ACHIEVEMENT

**The following is a description of a person in the ACHIEVEMENT stage of change:**

Adopts new self-image consistent with desired behavior and lifestyle. Does not react to temptation in any situation. Expresses confidence and enjoys self-control. Appreciates a healthier and happier life.

**Keywords: Confidence; Self-control; Success.**

After a long period of sustained change, most people move on with their lives. New behaviors have replaced the old, harmful ones and the old, harmful behaviors no longer have a place in one’s life. One becomes an ex-user. Hence in SMART Recovery, we may graduate.

#### **Slip, Lapse, or Relapse:**

This is an event, not a stage, and may occur at any time in the stages of change. This is characterized by a temporary loss of progress, however progress can resume again either within the same stage of change or in an earlier stage of change (a “slip” down). The relapse experience is educational to help prevent further recurrence.

**Keywords: Dangerous; Opportunity; Enlightened; Learning; Acceptance.**

Though not inevitable, a violation of the decision to abstain (a slip, lapse, or relapse) need not be an excuse for a period of prolonged or excessive using, or the cause for crushing self-reproach and guilt. It is better to accept possible slips, lapses, or relapses as a normal part of the change cycle than to call your change attempt a failure and give up. Handled well, these can be brief, not overly dangerous, and serve as learning experiences.

### The Change Plan Worksheet tool

Now that we have looked at the stages of change, let's get started with the Change Plan Worksheet tool. SMART is all about planning, so if your goal is to recover, then a plan is needed. As we say in meetings: a goal without a plan is merely a wish. The Change Plan Worksheet tool will help you identify what it is you want to do (set a goal or goals) and how to go about doing it.



#### THE TOOL: The Change Plan Worksheet

EFFECTIVELY USED FOR WHICH OF THE 4 POINTS?

- Building Motivation**    Coping with Urges    Problem Solving    Lifestyle Balance

The changes I want to make are:

The most important reasons why I want to make these changes are:

The steps I plan to take in changing are:

The ways other people can help me are:

Person   Possible ways to help me

I will know that my plan is working if:

Some things that could interfere with my plans are:

How important is it that I make this change:

Not at all Important    $\xrightarrow{\hspace{10em}}$    Most Important  
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

How confident am I that I can make this change?

Not at all Confident    $\xrightarrow{\hspace{10em}}$    Most Confident  
0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Save this worksheet and look at it from time to time to see how you are doing.

Now that we've reviewed the CAGE questionnaire, the Stages of Change, and The Change Plan worksheet tools, we will continue by examining more of the tools that help with each of the four focus points mentioned in the 4-Point Program.

### 5. THE SMART PROGRAM POINT #1: BUILDING AND MAINTAINING MOTIVATION

Motivation is important to recovery. In fact, it's the most important point. You have demonstrated motivation by coming here and now the task is to keep it for the journey ahead. There are several tools which can work to help with motivation including the one you just did above, The Change Plan. The Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) is also an excellent motivating tool because it illustrates the positives and negatives of your addictive behavior. It's a very useful tool early on and you can keep referring to it as your recovery progresses.

#### The Cost-Benefit Analysis Tool



**THE TOOL: Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)**

EFFECTIVELY USED FOR WHICH OF THE 4 POINTS?

- Building Motivation     Coping with Urges     Problem Solving     Lifestyle Balance

The substance or activity to consider is (Example: Alcohol; Gambling; Percocet): \_\_\_\_\_

**As you try to fill in each quadrant below, label each item as a short-term or a long-term advantage/disadvantage.**

Of Using or Doing	
Advantages (benefits and rewards of using or doing)	Disadvantages (costs and risks of using or doing)
Of NOT Using or NOT Doing	
Advantages (benefits and rewards of NOT using or NOT doing)	Disadvantages (costs and risks of NOT using or NOT doing)

## 6. THE SMART PROGRAM POINT #2: COPING WITH URGES

Urges are a common problem in recovery and can be very intense and difficult to deal with. However there are certain things that might be helpful for you to know about urges:

- Urges are very common but become less frequent and intense the longer that you abstain.
- Urges usually don't last very long - minutes rather than hours.
- You don't have to give in to urges; there are other ways to deal with them. Here's how:

### The D.E.A.D.S Tool



#### **THE TOOL: DEADS- Delay-Escape-Avoid-Distract-Substitute**

EFFECTIVELY USED FOR WHICH OF THE 4 POINTS?

- Building Motivation  
  **Coping with Urges**  
  Problem Solving  
  Lifestyle Balance

### **D.E.A.D.S**

The letters stand for a reminder of some techniques for dealing with urges.

#### **D=Delay.**

It is a fact that the mind cannot hold a single thought for any length of time. If you don't believe me, just try to meditate on your navel for 20 minutes. Think of NOTHING else. Don't think of that ticking clock you hear, don't think of your foot that itches, and don't think about how much time is left before you can get up and make dinner. Just your navel, period! Hmmm, pretty hard to do. You can use this fact to crowd out urges by postponing them for a later time. Twenty minutes later, the urges will not seem as urgent as it did when it first appeared. Wait that nasty thought out and it will disappear. Try it! What have you got to lose except ... your urge.

#### **E=Escape the situation.**

We cannot ALWAYS manipulate the situation, but often we can. If you have chosen to go to a party, and the urges are looking 'irresistible', do yourself a favor and get the heck out of there. Mark parties off your list for several months. If certain friends seem to 'make you want to drink', put them on the back burner for a while. If driving by your favorite bar puts a yearning in your stomach, drive home a new way for a while. Several months down the road you can experiment with dealing with tempting situations, but why do it in the first sensitive weeks? There is plenty of time later. Give yourself a break!

#### **A=Avoid.**

Make your list up now of triggers that YOU feel tempt YOU and avoid them. Avoid them for good or just for a while. This is your list and your choices. Putting them on paper NOW rather than finding yourself in a sticky situation later makes much more sense to me.

#### **D=Distract.**

Distraction or diversion is something that we talk about a lot around here. Having a list of things to do, in advance, is insurance for when the only thing you can think of to do is drink. Pull out that list and pick an activity... and just do it... whether it feels like something you want to do or not. I have found that at first, I would say 'Heck, I don't want to do that'... but after making myself do it, it became fun. My favorite motto of late:

*'Motivation follows action'*

I said earlier that it is hard for you to hold one thought in your mind for any length of time, just think how hard it is to hold TWO thoughts at once! This distraction technique utilizes this principle.

#### **S=Substitution.**

You can substitute an irrational belief with a rational belief. You can substitute an addictive behavior with a healthy behavior. You can substitute cranberry juice for beer. You can substitute jogging around the block instead of eating chocolate cake. You can substitute feeling sorry for yourself with coming to an online meeting. The possibilities are endless.

**DEADS.** Another tool to stick in your SMART-tool belt.

## 7. THE SMART PROGRAM POINT #3: MANAGING THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, AND BEHAVIORS

Addiction is a thinking problem. Learning how to think in a new way about old situations and problems doesn't cure the difficulty, but it sure helps and is a key to success. Here you will learn how to do it.

There are common distortions of thinking that, by becoming aware of them, will help you change your thinking. Being cognizant of your distorted thinking can be the first step in disputing it. By disputing your distorted thinking, you can better manage your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) attributes much of the unnecessary upset or distress that we humans experience to the distorted beliefs we have learned (or invented). You can make yourself feel miserable by believing in, and re-indoctrinating yourself with self-defeating or distorted beliefs.

You can eliminate much misery and suffering by learning to discover and dispute your distorted beliefs. You can, with determined and persistent practice, learn to recognize the distorted beliefs and prove to yourself repeatedly that they are untrue, illogical and / or unhelpful in accomplishing your goals. Then you can toss them out, along with the negative feelings and inappropriate behaviors that lead to using and trade them for more effective or self-enhancing beliefs. Let's take a look:

### Common Cognitive Distortions

The following are four common cognitive distortions including their definitions, examples of distorted thoughts, and examples of disputing statements with which one can dismiss the distorted thoughts. To assist in understanding the examples, **Helpful or Self-Enhancing means** that which is realistic, logical, or practical; and **Distorted or Self-Defeating means** that which is unrealistic, illogical, or impractical.

### The Disputing Cognitive Distortions Tool



#### THE TOOL: Disputing Cognitive Distortions

EFFECTIVELY USED FOR WHICH OF THE 4 POINTS?

- Building Motivation    Coping with Urges    **Problem Solving**    Lifestyle Balance

As you review the table, think about your own possible distorted thoughts.

Four Common Cognitive Distortions	
1) <b>“Should” statements:</b> The absolute thinking of SHOULD (MUST or HAVE TO) which places unrealistic demands on yourself, others or the world.	
<p><b><i>Distorted Thoughts</i></b></p> <p>“Others SHOULD always treat me fairly.”                      “I MUST never fail.”                      “I MUST always be loved.”                      “The world MUST be the way I believe it should be.”                      “If I can’t have things the way I MUST, then I MUST feel better damn quick, and so I have to indulge in booze or drugs for the fast relief I demand.”</p>	<p><b><i>Disputing Statements</i></b></p> <p>Is it written in the “laws of nature” that people, places or things must or should be the way I want?                      “I may prefer life be my way, but demanding it be so only upsets me and makes change more difficult.”</p> 

2) **Overgeneralizations:** The CAN'T, ONLY, ALWAYS and NEVER thoughts which are also absolute (all or nothing) as well as demanding, and which give the impression that there are no options, when usually there are many.

***Distorted Thoughts***

"I always screw up."  
 "I can't seem to do anything right."  
 "I have to drink; it's the only way I can deal with the difficulties of life."

***Disputing Statements***

"Is what I'm telling myself true? No, because I don't always screw up. Besides, making mistakes, screwing up, and being fallible are a big part of being human. I'd better accept my humanity and stop making myself miserable."

3) **Frustration Intolerance:** The "I can't stand it", "I can't handle it", and "I can't deal with it" self-statements which are generally false beliefs, because people usually CAN stand, handle, or deal with it, although not necessarily in a very functional or comfortable way.

***Distorted Thoughts***

"I can't stand it when others tell me what to do."  
 "I can't handle it anymore."

***Disputing Statements***

"The fact is, I AM handling it, standing it, and dealing with it. It won't kill me. I can bear, though not like, all sorts of discomfort. Claiming that I can't, and complaining, only makes it seem worse."

4) **Awfulizing:** Here our thoughts exaggerate just how bad things are, such as when we believe that something is worse than 100% bad (impossible: it's impossible for things to be over 100% of what they are).

***Distorted Thoughts***

"It's terrible when I make a mistake."  
 "It's awful when things don't go my way as they should."

***Disputing Statements***

"Sure this is bad, but not awful if it could be worse."

Special note: There ARE events that are truly tragic and do lead us to appropriately feel grief. You might use the language of grief and call them horrible, terrible, and awful, but going beyond grieving to some form of self-destructive escape, whether intoxication or suicide, is clearly inappropriate and unhelpful. In the end, grief can pass (assuming you live) and intoxication only delays the grieving process.

### The ABC Tool

Holding on to distorted or self-defeating beliefs, as described above, makes things seem worse than they really are. This can lead you to feel worse than you would otherwise and/or to behave in inappropriate ways. By using the following tool, called The ABC Tool, especially during disputing, you can more easily change your feelings and behaviors. First, let's define what we mean by the ABCs and DEs in The ABC Tool:

The Meaning of A B C (D E) in SMART's ABC Tool	
<b>A Activating</b>	A means an Activating event. Any person, place, or thing, or even emotion, we experience.
<b>B Beliefs</b>	B means Beliefs about the Activating event, both the helpful and the dysfunctional beliefs.
<b>C Consequences</b>	C means the Consequences of the Beliefs. The consequences could be any negative feelings, such as rage, depression, and anxiety; and any inappropriate behavior, such as using drugs or alcohol.
<b>D Disputing</b>	D means Disputing the dysfunctional beliefs and then adopting helpful beliefs. Disputing is the major activity of the ABC tool strategy.

<b>E Effects Effective New Belief</b>	<p><b>E</b> means the Effects of disputing. For example, the effects of disputing dysfunctional beliefs could be that the original negative feelings are softened or reversed, such as feeling annoyance rather than anger; or sadness rather than depression; or concern rather than anxiety; or feeling positive feelings such as happiness or contentment. The effects may also be appropriate new behaviors such as gaining independence from drugs and alcohol. E sometimes can mean effective new belief which means the new thinking and its result.</p>
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### An ABC Example

In order to understand this important tool before you use it, we've provided an example below of how one person used the tool during an upsetting experience.

<b>An ABC Example</b>		
<b>A</b>	The activating experience	A woman friend breaks the news that she is going out with another man and therefore wishes to break off her relationship with you.
<b>B</b>	The irrational beliefs about the experience:	"I really must be a worthless person. I'll never find another great woman like her. She doesn't want me; therefore no one could possibly want me."
		—and/or— "This is awful! Everything bad happens to me! She shouldn't be that way. I can't stand the world being so unfair and lousy."
<b>C</b>	The upsetting emotional consequences:	Depression and/or Hostility >> Urge to use >> Relapse
<b>D</b>	Disputing the irrational ideas:	"Where's the evidence that because this woman wishes to end our relationship, that I'm a worthless person; or that I'll never be able to have a really good relationship with someone else; or even that I couldn't be happy alone? Why is it awful that I'm not getting what I want? Why shouldn't the world be full of injustices? How does her rejecting me make me a bad person?"
<b>E</b>	The new emotional consequence or effective new belief:	Sadness: "Well, we did have a nice relationship, and I'm sorry to see it end, but it did have its problems, and now I can go out and find a new friend."
		—and/or— Annoyance: "It's annoying that she's seeing someone, but it isn't awful or intolerable."

So now try it for yourself! See The ABC Tool problem solving worksheet on the next page.

**THE TOOL: The ABC Tool**

EFFECTIVELY USED FOR WHICH OF THE 4 POINTS?

 Building Motivation   
  Coping with Urges   
  **Problem Solving**   
  Lifestyle Balance

**The ABC Problem Solving Worksheet**

**A**ctivating event. Provide an example of an activating event or experience in your life that has been upsetting to you. What is the Activating event? What happened? What did I do? What did others do? What idea occurred to me? What emotions was I feeling?

**B**eliefs. What are your irrational/dysfunctional beliefs about the event? What do I believe about the Activating event? Which of my beliefs are my helpful/self-enhancing beliefs and which are my dysfunctional/self-defeating beliefs?

**C**onsequences. What are the upsetting emotional consequences of your beliefs? Am I feeling anger, depression, anxiety, frustration, self-pity, etc.? Am I behaving in a way that doesn't work for me, for example, drinking, attacking, moping, etc.?

**D**ispute. Dispute the beliefs to find which are dysfunctional. What is the evidence that my belief is true? In what ways is my belief helpful or unhelpful? What helpful/self-enhancing belief can I use to replace each self-defeating or dysfunctional belief?

**E**ffective New Belief and Emotional Consequence. What helpful/self-enhancing new belief can I use to replace each self-defeating or dysfunctional belief? What are my new feelings?

## 8. THE SMART PROGRAM POINT #4: LIVING A BALANCED LIFE

Lifestyle balance is one of the things that we tend to have the most problems with. Just what is it? There are two ways to look at it. First, lifestyle balance is a balance between short-term immediate gratifications and long-term satisfactions (long-term, meaning satisfactions that endure). The second way to look at lifestyle balance is learning to live your life in a new way without your old habit.

### Short-term Versus Long-term Gratification

One way to illustrate short-term versus long-term gratification as it applies to you is to complete your own Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) above. Another way to understand the "short-term versus long-term" concept is to think of some of your values. By values, we mean those things that are most important to you. Some examples of values are: your family or your happiness in life. Once you complete your values list, then we ask you to set out some goals along the way to assure you can meet your values. Then we ask you to make plans to implement the goals. Sounds simple?? NO! But you can do it. Many have and this works. The Values and Goals Clarification tool below shows how to do it.



### THE TOOL: Values and Goals Clarification

EFFECTIVELY USED FOR WHICH OF THE 4 POINTS?

Building Motivation  
  Coping with Urges  
  Problem Solving  
  **Lifestyle Balance**

### Part 1: Values Clarification

Your values are your ideas about what is most important to you in your life —what you want to live by and live for. They are the silent forces behind many of your actions and decisions. The goal of "values clarification" is for you to become fully conscious of their influence, and to explore and honestly acknowledge what you truly value at this time in your life. You can be more self-directed and effective when you know which values you really choose to keep and live by as an adult, and which ones will get priority over others. We've provided a list below of some common values. Identify your values first by marking all those that are a life's value to you, and then rank your top 7.

Common Values: What is Most Important to You in Your Life? Rank Your Top 7		
* Being with people	* Being loved	* Holding on to what you have
* Being married	* Having a special partner	* Being free from pain
* Having companionship	* Loving someone	* Having it easy
* Taking care of others	* Having someone's help	* Avoiding boredom
* Having a close family	* Having good friends	* Enjoying sensual pleasures
* Being liked	* Being popular	* Being physically fit
* Getting people's approval	* Being appreciated	* Having prized possessions
* Being treated fairly	* Being admired	* Having deep feelings
* Being independent	* Being courageous	* Living fully
* Having things in control	* Having self-control	* Having a purpose
* Being emotionally stable	* Having self-acceptance	* Being safe physically
* Having pride or dignity	* Being well-organized	* Not getting taken advantage of
* Being competent	* Learning and knowing a lot	* Being comfortable
* Achieving highly	* Being productively busy	* Having fun
* Having enjoyable work	* Having an important position	* Looking good
* Making money	* Striving for perfection	* Being healthy
* Making a contribution to the world	* Fighting injustice	* Being a creative person
* Living ethically	* Being a good parent (or child)	* Growing as a person
* Being a spiritual person	* Having a relationship with God	* "Smelling the flowers"
* Having peace and quiet	* Making a home	
* Preserving your roots	* Having financial security	

## Part 2: Goals Clarification

OK, so there are your ideas about which values come top of your priorities. Where does this take us? Values are fine things to have, but what we are doing in SMART is changing behavior – so what you might like to do is to translate your personal values into your intended changes in behavior. The next task is to have a look at your goals, expressing them in terms of behavior change. Here’s a way to set it out. In the left hand column goes the VALUE that you defined earlier. Your values may already be reflected in your life, in which case your goal might be to keep things going along steadily. Or you may feel that your life doesn’t reflect your values too well, in which case you would probably want something different to happen. What you want to happen is a GOAL, and it goes in the next (middle) column. And the third column is what you (and this means YOU alone) are going to try to do about it, which is a BEHAVIOR or a specific action. We’ve filled in the first three rows of this worksheet as examples.

<b>VALUE</b>	<b>What do I want to happen? GOAL</b>	<b>What am I going to do about it? BEHAVIOR PLAN</b>
<b>Having a close family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I want us not to argue over my boozing.</li> <li>• I want us to enjoy time together as a family.</li> <li>• I want to be able to give my kids reasonable amounts of spending money.</li> <li>• I want my family not to feel let down by what I do.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stick to my resolution not to drink.</li> <li>• Not drinking will help. Be less bossy as well as less boozy.</li> <li>• Tricky...spending less on booze will help.</li> <li>• Try to make realistic commitments and keep them.</li> </ul>
<b>Being competent</b>	I want to feel more competent in my work or to mind less if I don’t feel completely competent at all times.	Work out a continuing work skills development program and carry it through. Learn to accept that I’m fallible by disputing the belief that I have to be marvelous at everything.
<b>Being emotionally stable</b>	I want not to lose my temper at all, or at least far less often. I want to stay cool under provocation!	Practice the skills of REBT including The ABC Tool and Disputing Unhelpful Beliefs in handling feelings, particularly the ones that sneak up on me.

## 9. WHAT'S A MEETING LIKE? WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AT A SMART MEETING?

One thing you will immediately notice in SMART is there is a meeting facilitator. This person is a volunteer, not a professional (s/he can be, but it's not likely) who has taken a little training in the SMART tools and is responsible for conducting the meeting. However it must be stressed that s/he is also a participant in the interactive nature of the meeting. SMART Recovery face-to-face (and most online) meetings are 90 minutes long. The meetings have a similar format no matter where you attend worldwide. The meeting format is generally as follows:

SMART Recovery Meeting Format		
Duration	Format	Description
	<b>Pre-Meeting (optional)</b>	Some groups may choose to run a half-hour pre-meeting to introduce the program to newcomers and answer questions.
5 minutes	<b>1. Welcome and Opening Statement Program Explanation (Optional)</b>	In some meetings, the opening is usually led by the group facilitator or another group member. For the new-comer, the facilitator may spend a moment or two explaining the program.
5-20 minutes	<b>2. Check In: Personal Update</b>	Briefly, each person in the meeting can take a minute or two to describe what has happened regarding recovery since the last meeting. For example, what challenges have you faced or do you anticipate facing? This is brief, though crises and extended items can be put on the agenda for work later in the meeting. The facilitator usually goes first.
5 minutes	<b>3. Agenda Setting</b>	The facilitator asks for agenda items based on the check in and the group agrees on an agenda.
30-45 minutes	<b>4. Working Time: Coping with "Activating Events"</b>	Focus on SMART Recovery's 4-Point Program: Open interactive discussion of issues raised in check in. Tools are applied as appropriate and are often demonstrated at the white board.
5 minutes	<b>5. Donations: Pass the Hat</b>	SMART depends on donations so although our meetings are free, we hope you will give what you can.
15 minutes	<b>6. Wrap up : Meeting Review and Plans for the Week</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What about this meeting was most meaningful or helpful to you?</li> <li>• What do you plan to do this week to promote progress in your recovery?</li> <li>• Things-to-do may also be suggested by someone else in the group.</li> </ul>

## 10. WHERE TO FIND A MEETING NEAR YOU

### ***Face-to-Face SMART Meetings in New England***

Just go to our SMART Recovery® New England website at [smartne.org/meetings.html](http://smartne.org/meetings.html) to find out where and when face-to-face meetings are held in New England – six nights a week (there are no face-to-face SMART meetings held on Saturdays).

### ***Face-to-Face SMART Meetings Nationally and Worldwide***

Just go to the National/Worldwide SMART website at [www.smartrecovery.org/meetings\\_db/view/](http://www.smartrecovery.org/meetings_db/view/) to find out where and when face-to-face meetings are being held in the US and elsewhere globally – seven days a week.

### ***Online SMART Meetings***

No matter where you are on Earth, you can always participate in live online meetings seven days a week (including Saturday!). Just go to the National/Worldwide SMART Recovery Online® (SROL) website at [smartrecovery.org/meetings/olschedule.htm](http://smartrecovery.org/meetings/olschedule.htm) to find out when the live online meetings take place. Online meetings are either text chat or voice chat and are a great SMART feature. We encourage you to attend from anywhere. A one-time registration at the site is required (see below for more information).

### ***Online SMART Message Boards***

The SROL Message Board is quite extensive, so don't expect to grasp it all right away! Be patient and take your time looking around. The main sections of the SMART Message Board are:

- Welcome to SMART (Feel free to introduce yourself in this section.)
- Tools and Discussions (This area is for any recovery or tool-related discussion.)
- Specialized Group Forums and Peer Support Groups
- Social Forums

To gain access to the SMART Message Board, a one-time registration at the site is required. Just go to this link to register: [smartrecoveryforum.org/index.php](http://smartrecoveryforum.org/index.php)

### ***Online SMART Chat and Meeting Rooms***

The SMART Recovery Chat Room is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Because our members are all over the world, there is almost always someone in the chat room. You may find a casual or joking atmosphere when you enter the room. However, if you have issues or want information, just tell us. SMART members and volunteers alike will be glad to help you.

## 11. CONCLUSION

In these pages we have presented an overview of our program to help you get started. All of it is displayed on our websites including the tools and worksheets for your use at any time. What is here in this handout is merely a “getting started” packet. We welcome you to the SMART Recovery program. We hope you will meet many good people here who will be helpful and supportive. They will also tell you of their successes and struggles. The power of the program is in the tools, in the supportive meetings in which they are used and learned, and in YOU.