



**Male  
Participant Workbook**

UCONN HEALTH

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*With Cognitive Rehabilitation Enhancements by*  
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Unit 1  
**My Foundation:  
Starting with Me**

**START  
NOW**



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## My Foundation: Starting with Me

### Session 1

## Understanding START NOW Skills Training & Why it Starts with Me

### START NOW versus Resisting Positive Change

The START NOW program is based on the idea that, no matter what, we can begin to move forward by *starting now*, and *focusing on ourselves*.

It is normal to resist change. Most of us can remember a time when we didn't want things to change even if the change was supposed to be a good thing.

#### Group Discussion

- What are some of the *reasons* we might resist change?

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- What are some of the *ways* we have resisted change?

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## The START NOW Approach

Discuss the following statements of the START NOW approach.

Please draw a  check in front of the statements that fit in with how you see things:

- “Instead of waiting for change, I start now.”
- “I can’t control anyone else; I control myself.”
- “Change starts with me.”
- “Any small positive steps I take get me going in a positive direction.”
- “I am responsible for my actions.”
- “I can’t change the past. I can start now to improve my future.”



## The 4 START NOW Skill Units

Here's what they are and how they each help with positive change-

1. **My Foundation: Starting with Me-** Positive change starts with you. This unit helps you know yourself. It helps you learn how to make yourself stronger. In this unit, you're introduced to 2 basic skills:

### **Focusing-**

Focusing is tuning into what is happening right now; both inside you and around you. This skill improves with practice and can help with all the rest of the **START NOW** skills.

### **ABC-**

The ABC System gives you a way to understand your behavior. Using ABC, you'll learn to break down your actions into 3 parts. ABC helps you look at what sets you off, how you acted and the consequences of your actions. It helps you have more control.

2. **My Emotions: Dealing with Upset Feelings-** A lot of people say they get into the most trouble when they do something impulsive instead of coping with feelings in a healthy way. This unit teaches new ways to cope with emotions, especially upset feelings.
3. **My Relationships: Building Positive Relationships-** Most people want happy relationships, with friends, family, and maybe a romantic partner, too. This unit helps you build the skills for successful relationships.
4. **My Future: Continuing My Path to Success-** All of the previous skills increase the chances of a successful future. This unit focuses on developing your skills for a happy future.

## Welcome to the START NOW Skills Group



### Here's some information & expectations about the group:

1. Your group is led by: \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Group sessions last for about one hour. Please arrive on time. Attend all group meetings, unless you are excused.
3. You are expected to respect each other both in and outside the group.
4. Each person's active participation is important to the whole group. Please listen without interrupting while others are speaking.
5. Please respect each person's confidentiality. What is said in group stays in group.
6. You are expected to practice your skills.
7. You are expected to bring your participant workbook and completed Real Life Practice Exercises to each group session.
8. To make the group a safe place with a positive focus, the following behaviors are not allowed:
  - Threatening remarks or behaviors
  - Sexually inappropriate comments or behaviors
  - "War stories," bragging about risky or destructive behaviors
  - Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
9. Breaking the rules may result in dismissal from the group.
10. Additional: \_\_\_\_\_



*Review the "My START NOW Personal Goal" practice exercise*

# My Foundation: Starting with Me

## Session 2



Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 1

### Focusing Skills

**Focusing is tuning in to what is happening right now.**



Many of us find that much of the time we are not focusing very much. Sometimes we go through life on “autopilot.” We may do things out of habit, not really paying attention to what we’re doing.

How can not focusing cause problems?

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## About Focusing Skills



### **Focusing skills are helpful to you.**

- Focusing helps you get information. You can miss a lot of information when you're distracted and not focused. You save a lot of energy by being focused. It helps you stay on top of things.
- Focusing helps you feel more in charge of your mind and body.

### **Focusing can become a habit.**

- Making a new habit takes practice. The more you practice, the more focusing becomes a new habit.

### **With practice, your skill level increases.**

- Practicing focusing skills can help everyone. This is true even if you have a learning or attention problem. In fact, in these cases, practicing can be even more helpful.



In what ways do you think focusing skills are used in sports or playing an instrument?

## Focusing: How to Practice It

- **Start by choosing a specific thing to focus on.**

Here are some possibilities:

- doing something physical like walking or exercising
- listening to a song
- doing a mental exercise, like word puzzles
- looking at a photo
- looking at something you usually just walk by
- brushing your teeth
- eating some food

- **Choose a set amount of time to practice.**

Just 2 to 5 minutes works well, especially at first.

- **Coach yourself to focus.**

- Tell yourself that you are going to practice focusing on that specific thing for that set amount of time.
- Try saying the word “focus” to yourself.

- **Slow down.**

- It’s hard to focus when you’re rushing. Take your time and focus on what you are doing.
- Aim your attention at what is happening right now. If you start to think about what is going to happen next, or what happened before, bring your attention back to now.
- Be mindful that talking too much can be a distraction.

- **It’s OK to lose your focus. This is how you actually practice focusing. Have a plan to get back to focusing.**

- Accept that losing focus happens. It’s normal and expected to find your thoughts wandering. You don’t need to give yourself a hard time about it.
- Refocus: When you notice that you’ve lost your focus, just turn your mind back to what you were focusing on.
- Expect to refocus your attention over and over again.



*Focusing Practice Exercise*

# My Foundation: Starting with Me

## Session 3



*Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 2*



*Focusing In-Session Practice Exercise*

### Open & Balanced Attitude

**So far in START NOW, we've been looking at ways you can prepare for success, starting with yourself. It's like athletes who go into training for a big competition. Not only do they work on their physical strength and abilities, they also have to prepare their minds.**



**A lot of athletes & coaches say that the main thing that determines success is attitude.**

**What do you think about that statement?**

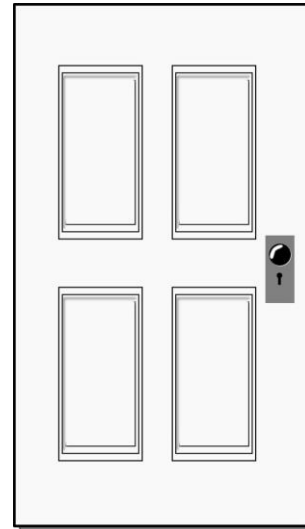
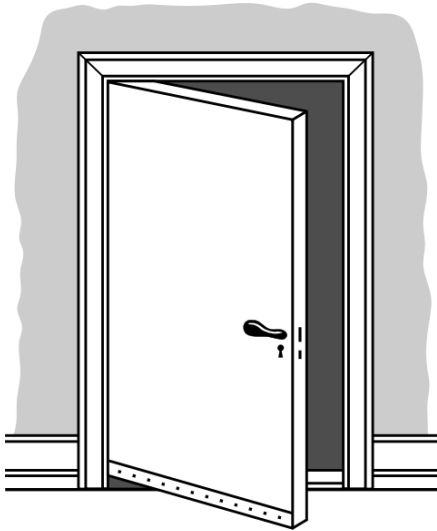
**What is meant by "attitude"?**

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**Let's look at some different attitudes:**



<b>OPEN</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>
Easygoing	Stubborn
Considering new ideas and opinions	Having a "Know-it-all" attitude
Listening to many possibilities	One-sided
Trying new approaches	Stuck in old ways of doing things
Seeing oneself and life as they really are	Having a narrow view of life and oneself
Seeing things from other points of view	Focused only on the self
Not willing to listen to another person's ideas	Interested in different opinions
Making healthy choices when appropriate	Trying to control every situation
Understanding that things do not always go favorably or according to plans	Focused on how life's not fair

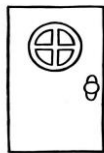
## ***In-Group Exercise***

We've looked at closed and open attitudes. How would an athlete respond to his coach's instructions depending on his attitude?



**How he may respond if his attitude is**

**CLOSED:**



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**How he may respond if his attitude is**

**OPEN:**



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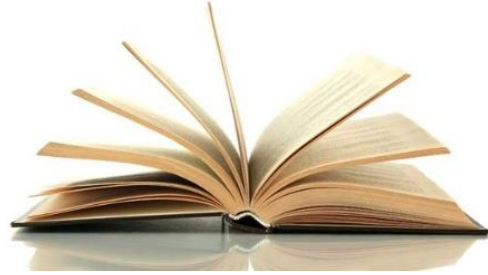
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## A Balanced Attitude

A balanced attitude looks at the whole story-

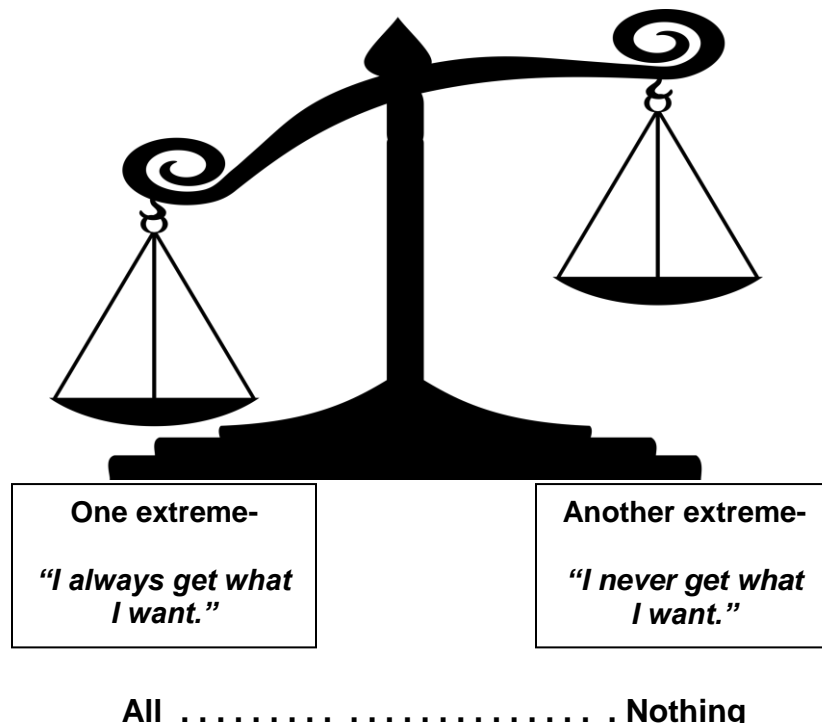


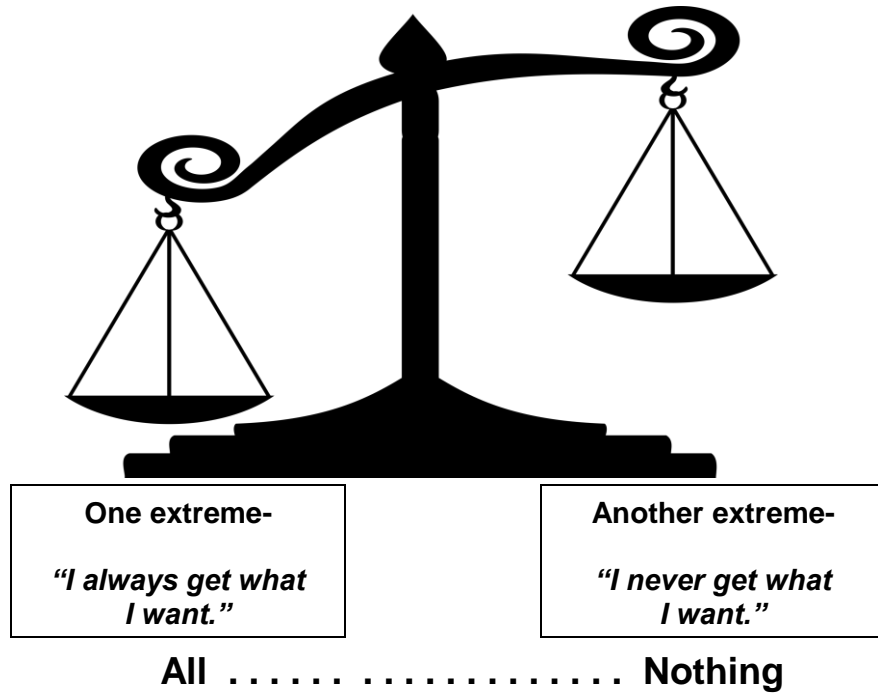
-not just part of it.

First let's look at what happens when a person is not using a balanced attitude:

- We may look at just one side of the story.
- We focus on one extreme. Some call this "all-or-nothing" thinking.

Look at the example below. When showing "all-or-nothing" thinking, a person just focuses on one of the extremes below.





In what ways can just focusing on one extreme side of the story be a problem?

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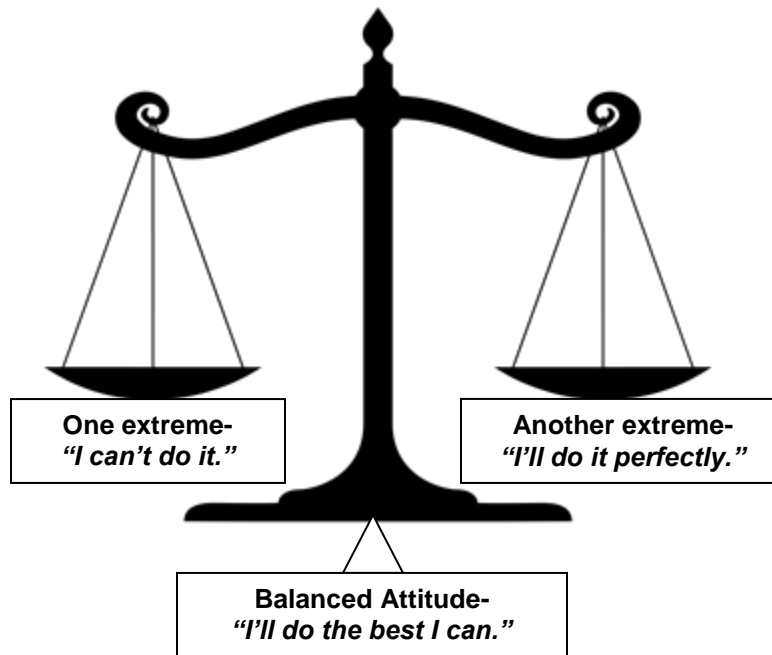
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Instead of all or nothing thinking, aim to balance the 2 extremes, like this:



## Tips for a Balanced Attitude:

- Start with an open attitude. This helps you see the whole picture.
- Replace extreme words like *“always,” “never,” “all” or “none,” “everyone” or “no one”* with in-between words, like *“sometimes” or “some people”*.
- Aim for a compromise between the two extremes.



*Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise*



## My Foundation: Starting with Me

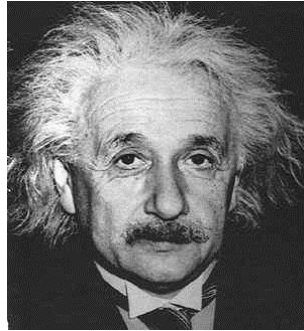
### Session 4



Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 3

### Understanding ABC Patterns

There is an old saying-



***“Knowledge is Power”  
Albert Einstein***

What does this mean to you?

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Knowledge can increase your power to make decisions. Knowledge can increase your power to control your own behavior. In START NOW you will learn to use the ABC System. This helps give you more options for how to act in tough situations. Increased self-control can improve your life while an inmate and when outside of prison.

**How do you think increased self-control might improve your life?**



## The ABC System

The ABC System is a way of looking at your behavior. It's a way to break down your actions into 3 parts:

**A= Activators**

What triggers you? It's what you react to, what gets you going or sets you off.

**B= Behavior**

What you do.

**C= Consequence**

What happens as a result of that behavior?

Here's an example of what the ABC form looks like. The full size one is on the next page. →

During **START NOW**, you'll use this to break down your behavior. We'll also be using this for group discussions.

BREAK IT DOWN, USING THE ABC SYSTEM

ACTIVATORS What triggered me?		BEHAVIOR What did I do?	CONSEQUENCES What happened?	
Activators around me What? Where? When?	Activators inside me Thoughts? Feelings?		Positive Consequences	Negative Consequences



For Behaviors above that did not work out well for you, fill in the boxes to the right, showing what you can do instead, when faced with similar activators.

BEHAVIOR What I can do instead-	CONSEQUENCES What are the likely consequences?	
	Positive Consequences	Negative Consequences

Here are some things to know about using the ABC system:

1. You can use it to understand both positive and negative behaviors.
2. At first, you will use it to look at actions you've already taken. The goal is to start using this system when things are actually happening.
3. Focusing skills help when using the ABC system. Focusing helps you slow down and think. The ABC system gives you a way to think things through. The goal is to think first, then act.

## BREAK IT DOWN, USING THE ABC SYSTEM

<b>ACTIVATORS</b> <i>What triggered me?</i>		<b>BEHAVIOR</b> <i>What did I do?</i>	<b>CONSEQUENCES</b> <i>What happened?</i>	
<i><b>Activators around me</b></i>	<i><b>Activators inside me</b></i>	<i><b>Action I took</b></i>	<i><b>Positive Consequences</b></i> +	<i><b>Negative Consequences</b></i> -
What?  Where?  When?	Thoughts?  Feelings?	Action		



For **B**ehaviors above that did not work out well for you, fill in the boxes to the right, showing what you can do instead, when faced with similar **A**ctivators. →

<b>BEHAVIOR</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCES</b> What are the likely consequences?	
What I can do instead?	<i><b>Positive Consequences</b></i> +	<i><b>Negative Consequences</b></i> -

## Example 1: BREAK IT DOWN, USING THE ABC SYSTEM

<b>ACTIVATORS</b> <i>What triggered me?</i>		<b>BEHAVIOR</b> <i>What did I do?</i>	<b>CONSEQUENCES</b> <i>What happened?</i>	
<b>Activators around me</b>	<b>Activators inside me</b>	<b>Action I took</b>	<b>Positive Consequences</b> +	<b>Negative Consequences</b> -
<b>What?</b> <i>A paper with writing on it was passed to me. A CO took it &amp; wrote me up.</i>  <b>Where?</b> <i>At chow.</i>  <b>When?</b> <i>Afternoon</i>	<b>Thoughts?</b> <i>I wanted to know what it said. Felt like cursing out the CO.</i>  <b>Feelings?</b> <i>Angry.</i> <i>Annoyed.</i> <i>Frustrated.</i>	<b>Action</b> <i>Punched the wall when I got back to cell.</i>	<i>Didn't tell off the CO &amp; get a worse infraction.</i>	<i>Hand was bleeding &amp; swollen.</i>



For **Behaviors** above that did not work out well for you, fill in the boxes to the right, showing what you can do instead, when faced with similar **Activators**.

<b>BEHAVIOR</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCES</b> <i>What are the likely consequences?</i>	
<i>What I can do instead?</i>	<b>Positive Consequences</b> +	<b>Negative Consequences</b> -
<i>Appeal the ticket.</i>	<i>Don't end up with a sore hand</i>  <i>Wasn't put in the disciplinary area</i>	<i>I may not win appeal.</i>

## Example 2: BREAK IT DOWN, USING THE ABC SYSTEM

<b>ACTIVATORS</b> <i>What triggered me?</i>		<b>BEHAVIOR</b> <i>What did I do?</i>	<b>CONSEQUENCES</b> <i>What happened?</i>	
<b>Activators around me</b>	<b>Activators inside me</b>	<b>Action I took</b>	<b>Positive Consequences</b> <span style="color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">+</span>	<b>Negative Consequences</b> <span style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">-</span>
<p><b>What?</b> <i>Called my brother-asked him to send me some money. He said no.</i></p> <p><b>Where?</b> <i>Phone in unit</i></p> <p><b>When?</b> <i>Friday evening</i></p>	<p><b>Thoughts?</b> <i>“This isn’t fair. Doesn’t he remember everything I did for him?” “He’s a selfish jerk.”</i></p> <p><b>Feelings?</b> <i>Angry, disappointed, sad, irritated and let down</i></p>	<p><b>Action</b> <i>Yelled, swore and hung up on him.</i></p>	<p><i>Was glad I didn’t just take it. Got it off my chest.</i></p>	<p><i>Now he probably won’t come visit or send me money.</i></p>



For Behaviors above that did not work out well for you, fill in the boxes to the right, showing what you can do instead, when faced with similar **Activators**.

<b>BEHAVIOR</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCES</b> <i>What are the likely consequences?</i>	
<i>What I can do instead?</i>	<b>Positive Consequences</b> <span style="color: green; font-size: 1.2em;">+</span>	<b>Negative Consequences</b> <span style="color: red; font-size: 1.2em;">-</span>
<i>Tell him I understand not having extra money.</i>	<i>Maintaining a good relationship with my brother.</i>	<i>I’m still mad he’s not trying harder to help me out.</i>

### Example 3: BREAK IT DOWN, USING THE ABC SYSTEM

ACTIVATORS <i>What triggered me?</i>		BEHAVIOR <i>What did I do?</i>	CONSEQUENCES <i>What happened?</i>	
<b>Activators around me</b>	<b>Activators inside me</b>	<b>Action I took</b>	<b>Positive Consequences</b> +	<b>Negative Consequences</b> -
<b>What?</b> <i>I picked up an application for a cook job.</i>  <b>Where?</b> <i>Local restaurant</i>  <b>When?</b> <i>A few weeks ago</i>	<b>Thoughts?</b> <i>"Maybe I'll just go for it. I won't know if I don't try."</i>  <b>Feelings?</b> <i>Worried Anxious Hopeful</i>	<b>Action</b> <i>Filled it out with a friend's help.</i>  <i>Handed it in.</i>	<i>I'm glad I finally did it.</i>  <i>Maybe I'll get the job.</i>	<i>Maybe I'll get turned down for the job.</i>  <i>I'll be disappointed.</i>



For **Behaviors** above that did not work out well for you, fill in the boxes to the right, showing what you can do instead, when faced with similar **Activators**.

BEHAVIOR  What I can do instead?	CONSEQUENCES What are the likely consequences?	
	<i>Positive Consequences</i> +	<i>Negative Consequences</i> -



## My Foundation: Starting with Me

### Session 5



*Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 4*



*Focusing In-Session Practice Exercise*

### Accepting Myself

Imagine a guy trying to learn something from a coach or a teacher. In the first picture, the instructor is respectful and patient. At the same time, this teacher expects the student to be responsible and to work hard.



Now think of a coach or teacher who is disrespectful and impatient. This teacher doesn't expect much of the student. He thinks the student is going to goof off and waste his time.



### Discussion:

Which coach or teacher do you think will get better results? Why?

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Which coach or teacher would you rather learn from? Why?

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Some people treat themselves like the second type of teacher. When trying to learn new things, these people treat themselves in ways that often make it harder to learn. They do not treat themselves with self-acceptance.

Here's how to recognize this negative pattern:

<b>Characteristics of Low Self-Acceptance</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Putting yourself down
<input type="checkbox"/> Getting really impatient with yourself, especially when you make mistakes
<input type="checkbox"/> Not expecting much of yourself
<input type="checkbox"/> Giving up quickly
<input type="checkbox"/> Not expecting yourself to work hard
<input type="checkbox"/> Making a lot of excuses for behaviors
<input type="checkbox"/> Putting yourself in unhealthy situations

When learning something new, like the START NOW skills:

- Treat yourself as the first type of teacher would.
- Be patient and kind with yourself.
- At the same time, expect yourself to work hard and be responsible.  
When you do this, you show self-acceptance.





Skills Sheet:  
**Accepting Myself**  
Part 1

**Use Focusing Skills**

- When you focus, you are tuned in to how you see things. This includes how you think and feel.
- Focusing skills help you accept yourself.
- When you are focused, you often feel more in control.
- Continuing to practice focusing can help you with self-acceptance.

**Practice Metta Meditation**

Metta meditation involves a positive view of yourself. Repeat one or both of these ideas silently to yourself:

- “May I be well and happy.”
- “May I be strong, confident, and peaceful.”

**Treat Myself as I Would Treat a Friend**

Many of us are kinder to our friends than we are to ourselves, especially if we don't like something about ourselves. Treat yourself the way you would treat a friend that you care about. When we treat ourselves kindly and accept ourselves, our self-acceptance is nurtured and grows. What are some ways you could treat yourself as you would treat a friend?



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Skills Sheet:  
**Accepting Myself**  
 Part 2

**Replace Negative Self-Talk with Positive Self-Talk**

- Notice how you “talk to yourself” and “talk about yourself.” This includes what you say in your own head, out loud, or in conversations with other people.
- Many people with low self-acceptance say a lot of negative things about themselves. When you notice that you’ve said something negative, replace the negative self-talk with positive self-talk.

Here are some examples:

<b>Negative Self-Talk</b>	<b>Positive Self-Talk</b>
<i>“I sounded stupid when I read that. I’m an idiot.”</i>	<i>“I think it’s pretty cool that I read out-loud like everyone else. Even if I make mistakes, I’m proud for trying.”</i>
<i>“I didn’t get any mail for two weeks. No one cares about me.”</i>	<i>“I didn’t get any mail because my family &amp; friends are working. They write me when they can.”</i>
<i>“All the Correctional Officers hate me.”</i>	<i>“I can get along with some Correctional Officers.”</i>
<i>“I always get in trouble.”</i>	<i>“Most of the time I don’t get in trouble &amp; I can work on getting in trouble less.”</i>
<i>“I’m always screwing up.”</i>	<i>“I’ve made some mistakes in my past but I’m always the first to admit it. Plus, I do a lot of things right.”</i>



*Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise*

# My Foundation: Starting with Me

## Session 6



*Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 5*



*ABC In-Session Practice Exercise*

### **Accepting My Situation**

#### **Hard-to-Accept Situations**

We all face some difficult situations that we cannot change, but which we may find hard to accept.

*Group Discussion*



What are some situations that may be hard to accept?

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Look at those hard-to-accept situations. What do you think are some of the reasons we may not want to accept them?

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## Why Some Situations are Hard to Accept:

- We don't want to feel sad or weak.
- We pretend we can go back in time and make it go differently.
- We're angry about the situation, and we just want to fight it.
- We just don't want it to be true.
- We don't think it's fair.
- We think we can will it away.
- We think we're not responsible for it.

### *Group Discussion*



**NOT ACCEPTING THE REALITY OF OUR CURRENT SITUATION  
CAN TAKE A LOT OF ENERGY & HOLD US BACK.**

**HOW?**

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## How is Accepting My Situation Helpful?

- When we stop fighting our situation, we can **deal** with it. We can use the energy spent fighting reality to cope instead.
- Accepting allows us to see what is really happening, instead of what we wish was happening. This helps us deal with things as they really are.



## How Can I Accept My Situation?

- Choose to “accept the things I cannot change.” Those words come from the Serenity Prayer:

*“Grant me the courage-  
To accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.”*

- Tell yourself that you can bear any of the upset feelings that may go along with accepting. In START NOW you will learn skills to cope with those upset feelings.
- Use focusing to simply observe the situation and your reactions to it. Encourage yourself to look at things as they really are.
- Sometimes it’s hard to accept another person’s actions. Remember that you can’t change what other people do. You can only change how you respond, or don’t respond, to another person’s behavior.
- Realize that acceptance often takes time. Be patient with yourself.



*Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise*

## My Foundation: Starting with Me

### Session 7



*Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 6*



*Focusing In-Session Practice Exercise*

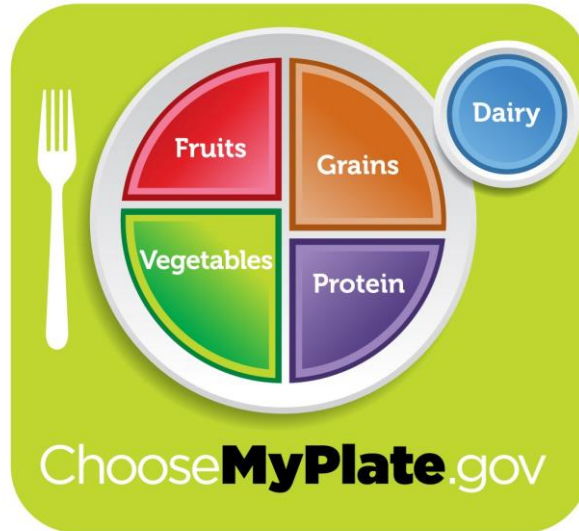
### **Self-Care Skills**

You can build a stronger life by improving the way you take care of yourself.



**Skills Sheet**  
**Self-Care Skills: Physical Wellness**

**Healthy Eating: *What are some ways to eat healthfully?***



- **Eat a balanced diet, including protein** (make healthier commissary selections)
- **Limit the amount of junk food you eat** (spread out the items you do purchase)
- **Eat three meals a day** (don't make a habit of skipping meals)
- **Drink plenty of fluids, especially when physically active and/or when it's hot out** (try and drink water throughout the day)

**Physical Exercise: *What are some ways to exercise regularly?***



- **Get regular exercise** (when possible go to the gym, walk during rec., or exercise in your room)
- **Participate in recreational activities.**



## Healthy Sleep: *What are some ways to cope with insomnia?*



- **Listen to soothing music, meditate, and read to cope with insomnia**
  - If you are able to, purchase CD's or a radio to help you relax
  - Choose relaxing music)
- **Participate in activities that are physically active during the day**
  - When possible, go to the gym
  - Walk during recreation times
  - Exercise in your room
- **Limit caffeine intake in the afternoon**
- **Aim for 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night**

## Medical & Dental Care: *Why do people sometimes avoid taking the steps below?*



- **Wash your hands regularly, & take a shower every time you can.**
- **Take medications as prescribed.**
- **Brush teeth regularly.**

## Skills Sheet

### Self-Care Skills: Mental Wellness

**Exercise your Mind: Do things that keep you interested and challenged.**



- Learn a new skill (try signing up for a job or school)
- Read
- Draw
- Write

**Build your Self-Confidence:**



- Give yourself credit for trying something new.
- Notice when you do something well.
- Let yourself be proud that you are doing something positive, even if the result isn't as good as you hoped for.
- Remember to replace negative self-talk with positive self-talk.
- Do one thing that makes you proud each day.

**Stick with the Winners:**



- Notice people around you who are doing well.
- Look for people whose lives are more like how you'd like yours to be.
- Spend more time with positive people.

## Skills Sheet

### Special Topic: When Medications are Prescribed

Here are some tips to increase your wellness when health care professionals have prescribed medication to treat physical and/or mental health conditions.



#### Talk with your treatment team. Here's how:

- If something gets in the way of taking the medication you are prescribed, tell mental health staff. Your treatment team can be helpful in discussing your concerns.
- Here are examples:
  - You experience side effects
  - You don't believe in taking such a medication
  - You don't think it is helping or is going to help
- Show an open & balanced attitude toward the feedback mental health staff provides. Here are some areas about which people sometimes find it hard to keep an open attitude:
  - Some side effects are unpleasant, but the medication may be helpful to other symptoms.
- Jot down some notes so you may bring them to your next appointment or write a request to communicate with mental health
  - This is helpful if you find that you sometimes forget what you wanted to say when you go to appointments.
- Realize that most medications work best when you take them regularly.
- If you don't like your medications or your side effects, don't stop taking your medication without talking to your prescriber. You and your prescriber team can work out a plan.



*Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise*

# My Foundation: Starting with Me

## Session 8



*Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 7*



*ABC In-Session Practice Exercise*

### Identifying & Developing My Values



### Values

Here's one definition of "values"-

The beliefs people have about what is most important in life; the beliefs that guide a person's behavior

**What does the word "values" mean to you?**

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**In-Group Values Exercises:**



Would bring to a desert island:

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A time I was proud of myself:

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An especially positive day:

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## Things to Know about Values:

- No one can determine your values but you.
- When it comes to values, actions speak louder than words.

### Conflicting Values:

- It's not uncommon to have 2 or more different values that go against each other and make it hard to make a decision.

For example: Jay values loyalty. He feels he's someone who sticks by his friends through thick or thin. He also values honesty and wants his friends to be real.

Jay finds out that a friend lied to him numerous times. He believes that he must decide to either stick it out or to end the friendship.

What would you do?



- Sometimes people keep the same values when they change their lifestyle, but find new ways to express them.
- People's values can change over time.



*Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise*

# My Foundation: Starting with Me

## Session 9



*Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 9*



*Focusing In-Session Practice Exercise*

### Identifying & Respecting My Personal Boundaries



The Great Wall of China

How are clear boundaries helpful to countries?

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Boundaries help people in many of the same ways.

#### **Personal Boundaries**

- **You comfort zone**
- **How you expect people to treat you, your property, & your time**
- **How you expect yourself to treat other people, and their property and time**

## About Personal Boundaries

- **People have the right to decide their own boundaries.**
- Some people were raised to think of what everyone else wanted or needed. It may be completely strange to them to honor and respect their own feelings and needs. Beginning to define your own boundaries is a way to begin respecting your feelings and needs.
- Personal boundaries help us connect with people, and not just keep them out.



- Some people have had such discouraging experiences with others that they may keep their distance from almost everyone. As they get more confident that they have boundaries to protect themselves, they often feel willing to let people in a bit more.
- Having & setting boundaries, and respecting other people's boundaries, can feel strange & good at the same time.
- Letting yourself have and respect boundaries may feel strange because you may not be used to it. At the same time, it often feels good to be clear about everyone's personal limits.



## Examples of Personal Boundaries

### Your Time. Questions to Consider:



- How do you prefer to use your free time?
- How do you know if you are giving too much of your time away to what everyone else wants to do?
- What time do you prefer to go to sleep?

### Your Belongings. Questions to Consider:



- How do you expect others to treat your belongings?
  - When do you lend items to others? To whom? Under what circumstance?

### Your Values. Questions to Consider:



- Are you willing to cheat or lie to get something?
- At what point, if ever, does a person's dishonesty cause you to end the relationship?
- How important is respecting differences to you?
- Under what circumstances, if any, will you drop what you are doing to help someone else?



*Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise*

## My Foundation: Starting with Me

Session 10 - **OPTIONAL SESSION**



*Review Content and the Practice Exercise from Session 9*



*ABC In-Session Practice Exercise*

### **My Spiritual Self**

**Many people feel that having a spiritual connection is very important. Each person's spiritual beliefs and practices are to be respected.**

**What does being spiritual mean to you?**

**Here are some things other people have said about what being spiritual means to them (there is no one right answer):**

*a meaningful life*

*a sense of peace*

*believing in something greater than myself*

*a sense of purpose*

*spirituality is something no one can decide but you*

*looking for the goodness in myself & others*

*always knowing there is someone there for me, someone to guide me*

## Ways to Recognize & Celebrate My Spiritual Self



### **Practice Focusing**

Focusing can help us to experience our truth, a deeper voice that is within. It can keep us “centered.”

### **With Prayer**

Talk to a Supreme Being, Higher Power, greater wisdom, or God. Ask for help and guidance. Recite a prayer, a song, or a poem that fills you with strength and inspiration.

### **Participate in a Spiritual Organization**

Attend a worship service. Worshipping together can provide support and fellowship. Ask about other special spiritual events. Study spiritual issues with other people. Request an opportunity to talk with religious services.

### **Look for Meaning**

Finding meaning in a painful situation is like finding a cloud with a silver lining. You’re able to see the good out of the bad.

- Example: Another inmate drives me crazy sometimes. Being here, though, has taught me to be patient with others.

### **Read Spiritual Literature**

Consider reading spiritual books. Visit the library. Request a bible from religious services.

### **Enjoy Spiritual Music**

Consider singing, listening, or learning to play spiritually influenced music.



*Review and Discuss the Real-Life Practice Exercise.*