RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN –
INTRODUCTION TO THE GROUP
Fort Campbell

The purpose of the Domestic Violence Offender Group is for the offender to develop and carry out their individualized relapse prevention plan. This group will create a safe environment where participants who have assaulted can share their experiences; challenge and support each other; acknowledge their offenses and cycle of offending; reduce denial; work toward taking full responsibility; recognizing impact on victims and victim empathy; recognizing impact of their own victimization; plan for regaining trust of family members and friends; identification of current maintenance behaviors; and work toward carrying out their own relapse prevention plan. Other issues, such as healthy attitudes toward sexuality, substance abuse, anger management, effective social skills, work habits, personal adjustment, couple issues, agency, and the legal system are addressed depending on the group members’ needs.

We focus the group treatment plan for all offenders on the identification of an individual offense cycle and development of a personalized relapse prevention plan. The idea of this plan is rooted in the belief that offenders could continue to experience the urge to offend without insight of their cycle of violence. The philosophy is that treatment helps offenders in managing their anger and behavior but treatment is not necessarily a cure or removal of the choice to offend in the future.

We develop the personalized relapse prevention plan after extensive group disclosure and discussion of the offender’s offense cycle. This incorporates an examination of the progression from the initial build up of anger through the steps that culminate or result in the choice to offend. We help the offender in understanding his own individualized offense cycle and identifying his specific pre-offense thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. We identify the progressive and self-reinforcing nature of the pre-offense components to help the offender in recognizing that the offense is not a spontaneous event, but the product of a generally predictable series of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. As well, we identify their current maintenance behaviors that make them more vulnerable to re-offend.

The personalized relapse prevention plan takes each step of the offense cycle and generates options, diversions or alternate behaviors that interrupt the offense cycle. All activities carried out in the group treatment relate directly or indirectly to interrupting the offense cycle and strengthening the prevention plan.

We develop the personalized relapse prevention plan orally and in writing. We frequently modify it as we gain new insights. We develop it in the group setting where all group members participate in identifying the options and strengthening the plan. We also work the plan in consultation with the chain of command, Probation/Parole Officer, the referring court. We stress the importance of the participant sharing their relapse prevention plan with people who support their treatment and can help them carrying out their plan. We expect the members to identify these people. We expect the members to remain in the group until they have completed all treatment tasks and accomplish group objectives and treatment, regardless of the number of groups specified by the referring court or jurisdiction.
In the beginning...

Making my victim(s)/survivor(s) come alive

1. Victim #1’s first name: Age:
   
   Relationship to you:
   
   What I did to him/her:
   
   How long the abuse went on?

2. Victim #2’s first name: Age:
   
   Relationship to you:
   
   What I did to him/her:
   
   How long the abuse went on?

3. Victim #3’s first name: Age:
   
   Relationship to you:
   
   What I did to him/her:
   
   How long the abuse went on?

Part One

This homework assignment should be completed before the ????? of treatment. You must disclose all of the abusive behaviors that you have engaged in throughout your child and adult life. You must include every victim and incident and not just those for which you have been charged. Start with your most recent offense and work backward. Discuss with the other group members and your therapists about your description(s) as you go along. Your work should be neat and legible.

Important: It is not acceptable to say that you do not remember what happened because you were so drunk when you committed the offense(s). In most cases this is simply an excuse to avoid talking about embarrassing things. In the unlikely event that you truly cannot remember what you did, then report what you believe is true based on the charges against you, victim statements, and any other information about the incident. You may use the work that you accomplished in previous treatment programs to help you complete this assignment.

Now think about the offense(s) that brought you into treatment and answer as many of these questions about your thoughts, feelings and behaviors before, during, and after your offense(s) and now that you are here.
BEFORE YOUR OFFENSE(S)

1. What were your thoughts before each offense?
2. How did you plan each offense?
3. What did you do to keep from getting caught?
4. How did you set yourself up for offending, e.g., drinking, fantasies such as placing your victim on a pedestal and being devastated when they failed to live up to your expectations, male privilege, etc.?
5. How did you make things so that it was easier to offend, e.g., rationalizations?
6. What are some excuses you used to allow you to go ahead with the offenses? e.g., they deserved what they got.

DURING YOUR OFFENSES

1. Describe your offense(s) in detail, including what was said and done by both you and your victim(s).
   - Where did the offense take place?
   - Tell exactly what you did, in detail?
   - What was your victim’s usual response during the offense and after?
   - What did the victim(s) do to fight back, both obvious and not so obvious?
   - How did you control your victim(s), both during and after the offense(s)?

AFTER YOUR OFFENSES

1. What you did to try to keep from getting caught (threatens, lies, etc.)?
2. What were your feelings after being caught?
3. What were the reactions towards you of your family, friends, and the victim after being caught?
4. How did you downplay your actions?
5. How did you explain to yourself or others what you did?
6. Whom did you blame for what happen?
7. Did you deny what you did? (Please explain)

8. Did you ignore your problem? (Please explain)

9. After they caught you, who were you the angriest with?

10. What were your feelings about your victim right after getting caught?

11. How did you feel about yourself, during and after offending?

**NOW THAT YOU ARE IN TREATMENT**

1. How do you feel about your victim now?

2. Do you think your victim feels toward you?

3. Do you think your victim was hurt? How?

4. Do you think you will re-offend? Why? Why not?

5. Do you have a sexual problem? (Please explain)

6. In what ways have you changed?

7. In what ways did you try to stop offending?

8. List ten (10) things you lose by offending.

9. How has offending affected your life in the following areas?
   
   a) the way you feel about yourself:
   
   b) family:
   
   c) friends:
   
   d) marriage:
   
   e) work:

10. What are the major problem areas in your life now?

11. What are the major strength areas in your life now?

12. List at least four (4) things about yourself that you need to change to not re-offend.
13. What are the things you need in therapy, in other words, what can we do to help you help yourself?

**IF YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM (LAW) FOR OTHER REASONS, THIS NEXT SECTION IS THE PLACE TO MENTION IT**

1. When and how did you first get involved with law enforcement/police/courts?
2. What other things have you been involved with police for? When? What happened?
4. What other similar crimes have you been involved with and for how long?
5. Which drugs, drinks or chemicals have you used? For how long? Do you still use or plan on using?

**Part Two**

**My Offense Cycle**

The offense cycle describes the sequence of behaviors that led you to carry out the offense(s). In this exercise you are required to examine your thoughts, feelings and behaviors as you progressed through your offense cycle. Looking closely into your cycle may help you gain some insights of your maladaptive behaviors that led you to offend.

**My Current SUD’s**

In this exercise you are required to examine the decisions and behaviors that led you to offend. They may be small decisions and behaviors, but if left unchecked they may lead you to offend again. We sometimes called them lapses. By looking closely at your lapses, and using them as a guide you can develop a list of risk situations that you will need to cope with successfully in order to avoid a total relapse – i.e., re-offending.

**My Thinking Errors & Their Alternates**

When people commit offenses they make it easier for themselves to do it by making excuses (which are sometimes called thinking errors, distortions, and rationalization). Use the thoughts from your offense cycle as a guide to identify at least 10 thinking errors which you used in the past to “give yourself the permission” to engage in both your offense-related behaviors and the offenses themselves. Then provide at least one appropriate alternate way of thinking to each of these thinking errors. You should regard this exercise as a rehearsal for a thinking strategy you may use in the future to lower your risk of re-offending.
1. Thinking Error: Alternate Thinking(s):

2. Thinking Error: Alternate Thinking(s):

3. Thinking Error: Alternate Thinking(s):

4. Thinking Error: Alternate Thinking(s):

5. Thinking Error: Alternate Thinking(s):

6. Thinking Error: Alternate Thinking(s):

7. Thinking Error: Alternate Thinking(s):

8. Thinking Error: Alternate Thinking(s):

9. Thinking Error: Alternate Thinking(s):

10. Thinking Error: Alternate Thinking(s):

11. Thinking Error: Alternate Thinking(s):
Coping Strategy

In this exercise you are required for each risk situation or factor to prepare an avoidance strategy to prevent this from happening again. For example, if alcohol were a risk factor for you, then finding ways to abstain would clearly be a big help to you. In case you cannot avoid the risk situation you should have a clear idea of what to do. The escape plan would consist of two parts: (1) What you would say to yourself to get out of the situation, and (2) What you would actually do to get out. Do this for all risk situations that you can think of.

1. Risk Situation:
   Avoidance Strategy:
   Coping Thought:
   Coping Behavior:

2. Risk Situation:
   Avoidance Strategy:
   Coping Thought:
   Coping Behavior:

3. Risk Situation:
   Avoidance Strategy:
   Coping Thought:
   Coping Behavior:

Victim Empathy – Part I

Answer the following questions as if you were the child/person that you offended. Write your name in the blank spaces.

1. How did you feel about ______ before the abuse?

2. What things did ______ do when the abuse first started?

3. How did it feel? (physically & emotionally)

4. What prevented/stopped you from telling someone about ______ and how did people finally find out?

5. Do you still think about what ______ did? (Please explain)

6. Has it affected your feelings about yourself and relationships with others? (Please explain)

7. Do you feel safe? (Please explain)

8. How did your abuse end? (Please explain)
9. What would you like to say to ______?

10. What would you like ______ to say to you?

11. Do you think ______ understands why you do or do not want to make contact? (Please explain)

12. What kinds of promises would you want ______ to make to you or others that have been hurt?

13. Should you forgive ______? (explain)

14. Do you ever want to see ______ again?

**Part Three**

**Individualized Relapse Prevention Plan**

Relapse prevention is a way of thinking or looking ahead to prevent getting into trouble again. Look at it as your insurance policy. Basically, you look at the progression you went through to get into trouble and you put a stop at each point to escape and/or avoid getting any closer to the trouble again.

**Now That I Am Not Offending:**

1. (a) What keeps you from offending, again? (Going to jail is not acceptable as an exclusive answer.)
   (b) How do you feel now that you are not offending?
   (c) What are you doing that makes you so sure that you will not offend?

2. (a) How have you set-up your life to stop you from re-offending?
   (b) List healthy activities you participate in and healthy outlets when you are upset.
   (c) Who do you talk with now about positive and negative things in your life?
   (d) What high-risk situations do you try to avoid?

3. What are some of the areas of your offense cycle you still have problems with?

4. Who can you tell about your close calls and urges to assault or use power and control?

**Motivation:**

5. (a) List the current situations that make you angry, depressed, stressed out, and want to take revenge.
   (b) What do you think is going on that is making you so angry and stressed out?

6. Write down other ways of understanding your current situations.
(a) Identify specific problem situations with your partner, parents, siblings, employer, and/or friends.
(b) Write down specific coping skills to handle the situations.

(a) Write down how you and your partner feel in conflict situations (perspective taking).
(b) How can you take responsibility for further developing coping and problem-solving skills (e.g., counseling, any special programs, schoolwork, and discussion with other people)?

Internal Barriers:

7. What thinking errors/lies, misinterpretations, etc. have you solved?
8. Which thinking errors do you still have trouble with that might contribute to your SUD’s.
9. List the people you can discuss your thoughts and feelings with so as to help you check your thinking errors. Please provide names and telephone numbers.

Relapse:

10. Relapse – where are you still vulnerable to victimizing or offending another person?
11. What thinking errors make you still vulnerable to victimizing or offending another person?
12. What would re-offending mean to you?
13. List the consequences to your survivors, your family, your friends and yourself if you were to re-offend.
14. Who do you talk to about your worries and potential problems?