

Facilitators' Manual

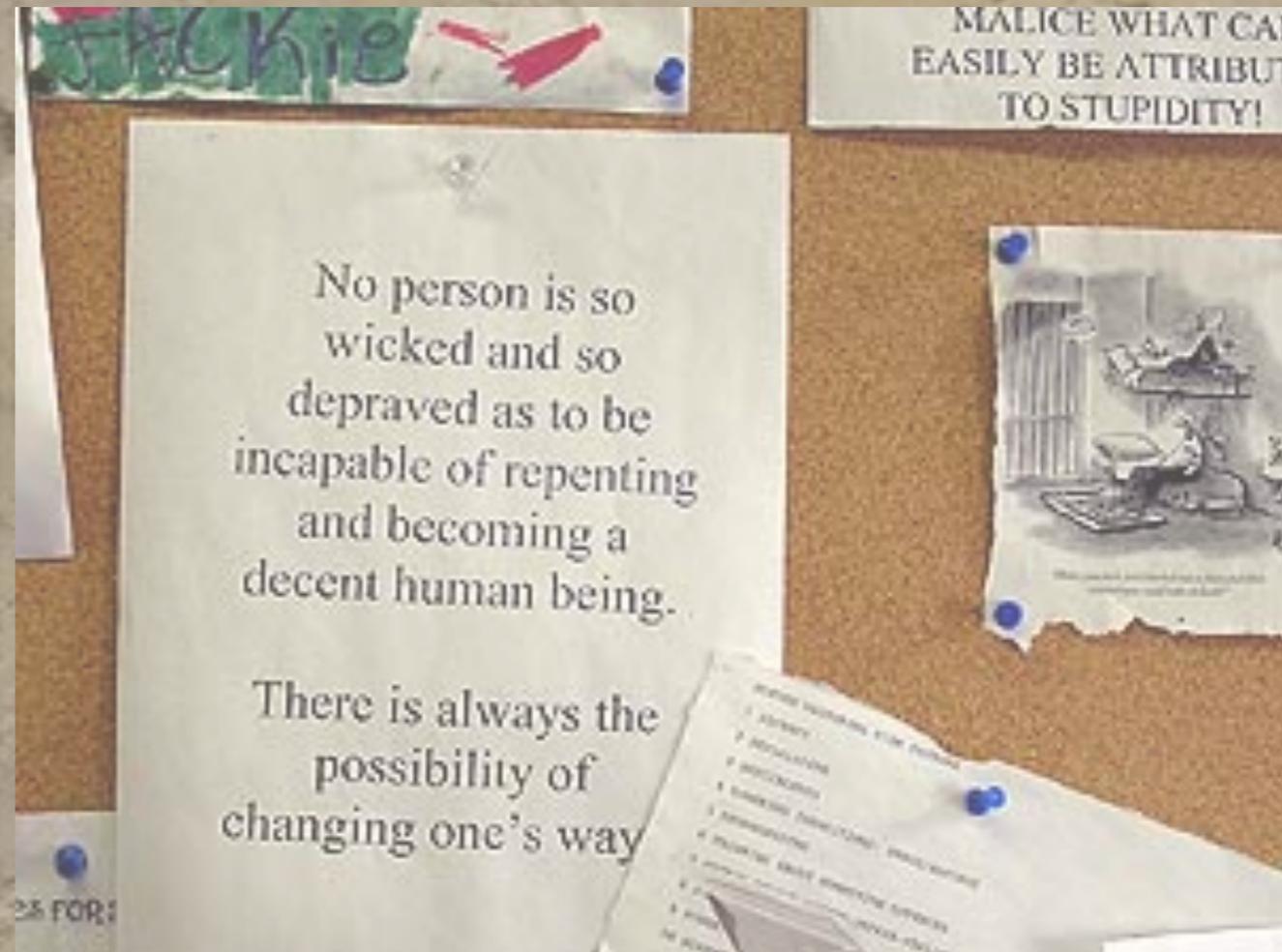
COGNITIVE SELF CHANGE

JACK BUSH, PHD
RICHARD PARKER, PHD

Chapter 1

CSC

This manual describes the processes needed to effectively deliver CSC. Various jurisdictions around the world use CSC and all have their local manual. Our aim in producing this manual is to enable other jurisdictions to be able to adopt CSC. Consequently, we have aimed to produce a document that will facilitate this, while simultaneously outlining how we think CSC can best be run. We would encourage anyone considering starting CSC to seek assistance from an experienced facilitator to assist them in this process.



What is Cognitive Self Change?

The Cognitive Self-Change Program (CSC) is a cognitive-behavioural intervention that aims to reduce violent and general reconviction in offenders with a pattern of antisocial behaviour and criminality.

The program was originally developed by Jack Bush and has been running in the Vermont State Correctional Service since 1989. The Vermont program runs both in prison and in the community. Adaptations of this program have been developed in the UK, Northern Ireland, Australia and numerous states in the USA. It has been used with adults and juveniles of both genders, with particular forms of offending (violence, domestic violence, sexual offences) and with general offenders.

The program aims to reduce recidivism by changing offenders' criminal thinking processes and individual patterns of antisocial thinking that lead them to crime.

WHAT IS CSC?

- ❖ *A Cognitive Behavioural Program*
- ❖ *Open Group*
- ❖ *Competency Based*
- ❖ *Addresses the individual patterns of thinking that lead to offending*



THE FOUR STEPS OF COGNITIVE SELF CHANGE

- ❖ *Step 1. Learn to pay attention to your thoughts and feelings, underlying rules and principles.*
- ❖ *Step 2. Learn to recognize how your thoughts and feelings, underlying rules and principles lead you to do crime or violence.*
- ❖ *Step 3. Find new ways of thinking that don't lead you to do crime or violence—and that also provide you with a sense of self-worth.*
- ❖ *Step 4. Practice using your new thinking until you can use it when it counts, in real-life situations.*

How Does CSC work?

The Cognitive Self-Change Program aims to change criminal behaviour by addressing the anti-social thinking which leads offenders to crime.

Offenders move, at their own pace, through a series of steps that provide them with the skills to identify and change their high-risk internal behaviours (thinking) and address their risk factors for crime. The four steps of Cognitive Self Change are described in the side-bar.

One important point of difference between CSC and other offender programs is that the gaining of competencies is taken seriously. A participant cannot move on to the next step until he clearly has gained the competency required by the current step. Hence, all graduates will have gained the skills of Cognitive Self Change.

Another point of difference is that CSC targets thinking at three levels: Historical (their past offences); Recent (the last week); and Here-and-Now (the thinking and behaviour they are exhibiting

right here, right now). CSC investigates the links between the participants' current thinking and the thinking underpinning their offending – in many cases it is the same thinking.

The program begins by developing participants' ability to self-monitor objectively, record and report the thoughts, feelings, underlying rules and principles which occur before, during and after they act criminally or are tempted to do so. Techniques including cognitive check-ins and thinking reports are used to facilitate this process. Other rule breaking behaviour is included, as thinking that occurs at these times is likely to reflect some of the same antisocial patterns as those which underpin crime and violence. Similarly, the thinking underpinning their defiant and disruptive behaviour within group is explored using Cognitive Check-Ins and the Strategy of Choices.

The ability to self-monitor objectively means that offenders begin to report incidents and their internal behaviour in a way that does not blame others, minimise or deny their responsibility, justify their actions, censor the content of their internal world or present a distorted view of what actually happened.

Once participants have developed their ability to self-monitor objectively, they are provided with the skills required to make the connections between these thoughts, feelings, attitudes

and beliefs and their actual behaviour. In making these connections, offenders identify 'key pieces' of their internal experience, i.e. those that are particularly powerful in leading them towards crime. They then use these pieces to form a circle or sequence that describes their pattern of thinking and how it leads them, almost inevitably, to breaking laws. It can be a revelation for many antisocial offenders that they are trapped – not by the behaviour of others, but by their own thinking patterns – into behaving the same way over and over again.

This process removes a major obstacle to change, as the belief that others “cause” them to commit crime and violence, or the principle that they “have to” stand up to someone or act violently when they do certain things, takes responsibility away from the offender and leaves them in a situation where there is no reason to contemplate changing their behaviour. Removing this obstacle does not guarantee that the offender will change their behaviour, but it does increase the likelihood.

The circles and sequences exercise provides the groundwork for identifying intervention points. Cognitive check-ins, thinking reports and one-to-one sessions support this process and are more clearly described later in this manual. In Step Three, participants develop new thinking that will allow them to follow laws and rules, while simultaneously feeling

good about themselves. For some higher-risk individuals, this may involve carving out a new identity.

In Step Four of the program, participants practice the new thinking they have developed until they can competently and confidently carry it out in a range of practice situations. This is a key part of the program. Once the participants have competency in non-criminal methods for dealing with their needs, there is a much higher likelihood they will use these.

Review 1.1 Features of CSC

CSC targets which types of Criminal Thinking?

- A.** Thinking involved in their offences
- B.** Recent thinking
- C.** Thinking displayed in group
- D.** All of the above

Check Answer



Photo: Amanda Slater

STRUCTURE

- ❖ *CSC is an open group program*
- ❖ *Participants move at their own pace*
- ❖ *CSC teaches offenders the skills they require to change themselves*
- ❖ *Participants progress through the four steps of CSC as they demonstrate proficiency in each skill*

The Structure of CSC

The number of hours per session and number of sessions per week, will vary according to the local demands of sponsoring institution. CSC is flexible enough to be delivered in different formats, as long as the core features of CSC are followed.

In the original Vermont program, participants attend two groups per week and each group is between 60 – 90 minutes long. In other locations, community-based participants attend one group per week, which is 120 minutes long. Importantly, each group commences with each member doing a cognitive check-in followed by a number of presentations from members, with longer groups having more presentations than shorter groups.

CSC is an open, rolling entry, program. Participants enter a group when a space becomes available. Groups consist of no more than eight members, who will be at different stages of the program. Due to the requirement for members to clearly demonstrate each of the skills of Cognitive Self Change through a

range of presentations, there is no economy of scale in making groups larger, as that would result in each member taking accordingly longer to demonstrate their competencies. With highly disruptive populations, such as high-risk juveniles in community settings, it is often beneficial to cap the group at a smaller number, such as six members.

There are four distinct stages in CSC and these coincide with the four steps of Cognitive Self Change. Participants will 'graduate' through each of these stages as they achieve each competency. Participants at more advanced stages model the skills for those who have just joined the group. This has the advantage of reducing the amount of resistance displayed by new members, as they find little social support for their complaints. Each group should have two facilitators, as there is a need to keep track of the progress of each member's contribution throughout the session.

On average, a participant will attend group for about 80 hours. Length of treatment does, however, depend on the needs of the group member and some participants will require more than this to meet the goals of the Program.

A significant strength of the program, is that its design allows it to be individually tailored to meet the needs of those who progress through it. Offenders are not an homogenous group; the review of the literature suggests that high-risk offenders

are likely to have general antisocial characteristics plus a combination of risk factors, unique to each individual.

The Program makes no assumption about the thinking patterns that form the basis of each members' offending and does not aim to label or pigeon-hole types of pro-offending thinking patterns. The Cognitive Self Change process can accommodate whatever combinations of thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs that underpin an offender's violence and criminality. Irrational and distorted thinking can be identified as well as hostile attribution, negative attitudes and pro-criminal beliefs. The way in which these thought processes combine, to lead to crime and violence in the individual, are explored and understood, and intervention strategies developed which directly target the specific combination.

It is likely that the offenders selected for the group, will experience difficulty in obtaining their goals pro-socially; but their individual patterns may be quite unique. Offenders are facilitated through a process that allows them to identify their own patterns of risk for criminal behaviour and in doing so take on the responsibility for their own internal and external behaviour.

Progress through the program is dependent upon the satisfactory completion of a number of tasks. These are summarised in the table below:

Task	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
<i>Check-ins</i>	Step 1 only	Steps 1+2	Steps 1+2+3	Steps 1+2+3
Journals	TR x 3	Update TR x 3	Update TR x 4	New Thinking
Journals		New TR x 1	New TR x 1	Practice Log
Journals			Themes & Patterns	SRMP

Review 1.2 CSC Structure

Select all the answers which are true

- A.** CSC has a set number of sessions
- B.** No participant will spend more than 80 hours in group
- C.** CSC can accommodate a wide variety of offenders
- D.** All group members are at the same stage

Check Answer

Does CSC Work?

A reconviction study completed by Hennings and Frueh (1996) has demonstrated a significant decrease in new charges two years post release for offenders who completed CSC at the Northwest State Correctional Facility and who were released between June 1988 and September 1993. Of the CSC group, which included those who dropped out very early in the program, 50% were reconvicted compared to 70.8% of the comparison group. Failure rate analysis shows that reconviction remained significantly lower for this program group over a three-year period.

A study by Baro (1999) has also shown reduced levels of institutional violence and antisocial behaviour following completion of a cognitive self-change program. Assault rates were significantly lower in offenders who attended six months of treatment as were incidents of disobeying a direct order, days of detention and days lost.



DOES CSC WORK?



Chapter 2

OVERVIEW OF CSC

Theory

Principles

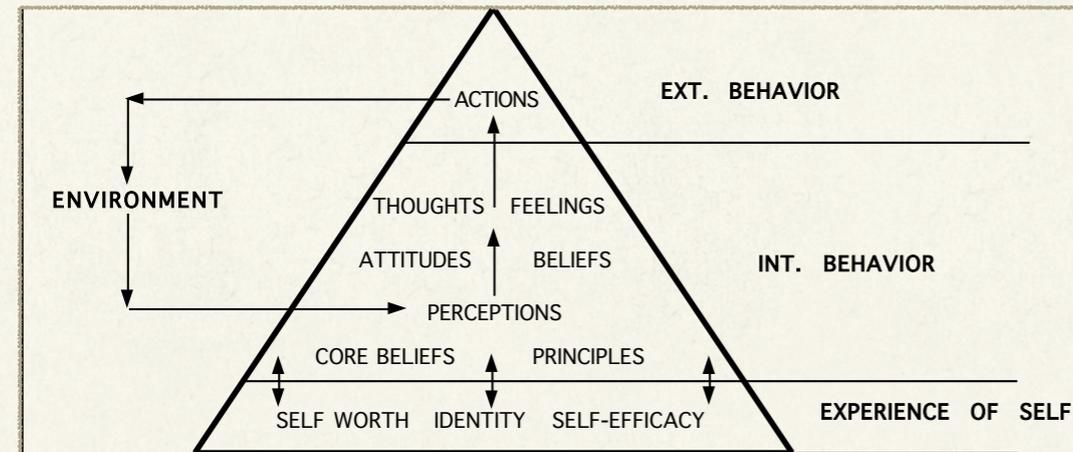
Task-based delivery

Program Rules

Strategy of Choices



Theory, Steps and Principles



Our cognitive-emotional structures determine how we experience the world and how we act in it.

These structures are learned patterns of internal behavior. They translate basic psychological needs into personally meaningful patterns of action within our environment.

THEORY

- ❖ *Our thinking directs our behaviour*
- ❖ *Repeated patterns of thoughts and behaviour become habits*
- ❖ *We can direct our conscious attention towards those habits*
- ❖ *We can choose an alternative path*
- ❖ *If we practice that enough, it also becomes a habit*

Cognitive Self Change is a simple strategy of directing our life by consciously choosing the way we think.

We can think of human behaviour as embracing both external behaviour and internal behaviour. External behaviours are our physical actions. Internal behaviours are our thoughts and feelings, attitudes and beliefs. These two kinds of behaviour are intimately connected. Our physical actions express our thoughts and feelings. The way we experience ourselves and the world around us determines how we act in that world. We learn to act in the world and learn to think and feel about the world at the same time. These are both aspects of human behaviour: things we learn to do.

For the most part we take our ways of thinking and feeling about the world for granted. Our attention is directed to the world around us, not to our thoughts and feelings about that world. But we can, if we choose, direct our attention to the thoughts and feelings, attitudes and beliefs that go on inside our

mind. We can make our subjective experience the object of our attention.

When we do that some remarkable possibilities open up to us. Our ways of thinking—which are normally quite habitual and automatic—come within our conscious control. We can literally choose how we will think. By changing our thinking we can re-structure our way of experiencing ourselves and the world around us. We can re-define the meanings we find in our relationships with others and in our own actions. We can create new patterns of self-reward (reinforcement) for our actions by finding new meanings for what we do, and for what we avoid doing.

With offenders this can be a change from experiencing reward and reinforcement in crime and violence, to experiencing reward and reinforcement in responsibility and maturity. This is the goal of Cognitive Self Change. Cognitive Self Change is a process of helping offenders identify the ways of thinking that make crime and violence rewarding for them and make responsibility aversive, and helping them find new ways of thinking that make crime and violence aversive for them and responsibility rewarding.

This is quite a substantial change. It necessarily involves changing not only the immediate thoughts triggered in particular situations, but also changing basic beliefs and attitudes

that a person may have used their whole life to define their sense of identity and to guide their behaviour. This kind of change is possible and practical only if we can break it down into practical, simple steps.

Cognitive Self Change is a series of four steps. Each step is a skill leading to the ability to direct our lives by directing our thinking—the ultimate skill of Cognitive Self Change.

Step 1. Learn to pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, underlying rules and principles.

Step 2. Learn to recognize how your thoughts, feelings, underlying rules and principles lead you to do crime or violence.

Step 3. Find new ways of thinking that don't lead you to do crime or violence—and that also provide you with a sense of self-worth.

Step 4. Practice using your new thinking until you can use it, when it counts, in real-life situations.

Each step of Cognitive Self Change is a cognitive skill—a behaviour we can learn to perform inside our heads. Each skill is concrete and achievable. With a degree of honest effort, practically any human being can learn to do them. It does not require a high level abstract reasoning ability or high intelligence or high verbal skills. The basic ability to reflect upon our own internal experience—which is required—is

relatively easy to learn using the methods of Cognitive Self Change.

The skills of Cognitive Self Change are learned by practicing simple techniques: Thinking Reports, Cognitive Check-ins, and Journal Assignments. Learning is not restricted to group work. To learn these skills they must be performed, just as learning to dance or learning to drive a car requires actual dancing and actual driving. We demand that offenders learn the skills of Cognitive Self Change by actually performing them in real life situations. They practice new thinking and new behaviours together.

We can't force a person to undergo a substantial change in how they see the world. The cognitive-emotional roots of human behaviour are buried in habitual and private patterns of experience, well beyond the direct control of others. But the cognitive-emotional roots of our behaviour are themselves learned behaviours, and so in principle are subject to change. We can un-learn and re-learn these behaviours. No one can change by just wishing or intending it, but it can be done by deliberate, systematic, and well-directed effort.

In learning Cognitive Self Change, offenders learn how to experience the world, themselves, and other people, not as a criminal, but as a responsible person. They learn to use ways of thinking that support the gratifications and rewards of re-

sponsible living. But we don't tell offenders what to think. They need to find their own new thoughts, beliefs and attitudes. We are their coach. Our standard is that they use new thinking that does not lead to hurting others, and that (taken together with other changes in their thinking and acting) produces an experience of self-worth.

Review 2.1 CSC Theory

Which of the following statements are true for CSC?

- A.** Offenders can learn to think in ways that lead them not to offend
- B.** CSC teaches offenders what to think
- C.** Thinking is a form of behaviour
- D.** CSC requires a high level of abstract thinking

[Check Answer](#)



PRINCIPLES OF CSC

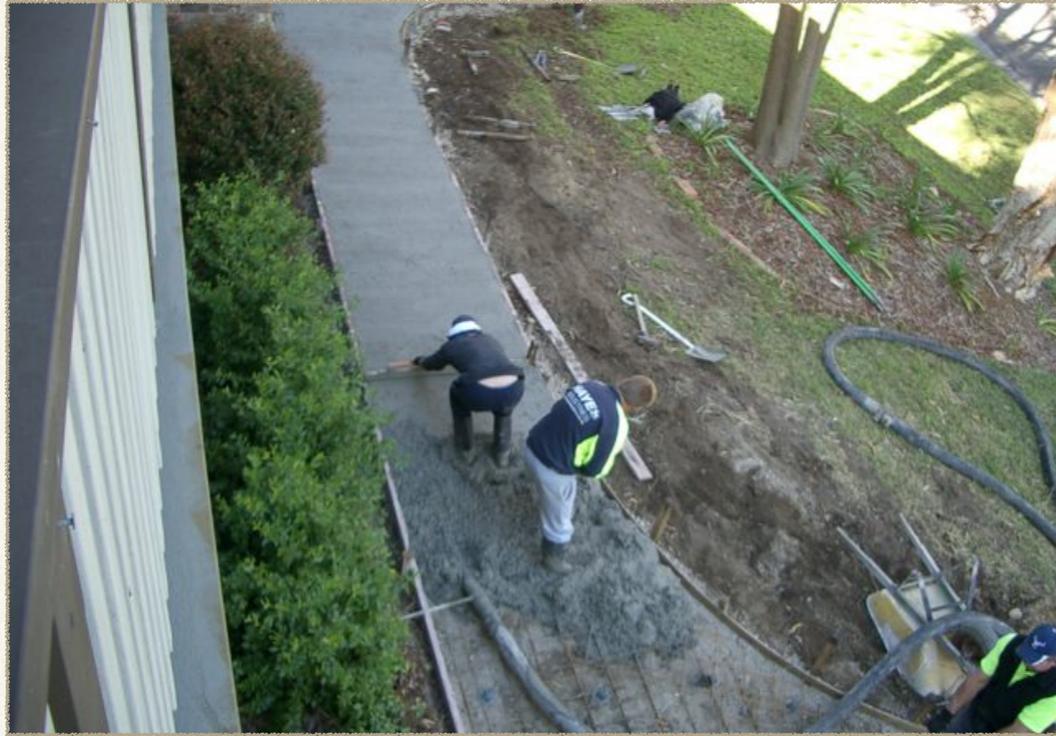
- ❖ *Criminality is learned - it is changeable*
- ❖ *We don't demand that offenders change - we demand that they learn how to change*
- ❖ *The skills of CSC are learned by doing them*

Three Principles of CSC

1. We define criminality as rooted in a set of learned cognitive behaviours, not as a characteristic inherent in personality. While personality characteristics can seem intractable, learned behaviour is clearly subject to change.

2. We don't demand that offenders change. We do require that they learn how to change. Cognitive Self Change presents them with choices together with accountability for those choices. Control of their lives remains with them. In fact, by learning Cognitive Self Change, offenders experience a degree of self-determination they have never had before.

3. The skills of Cognitive Self Change are learned by doing them. Only when offenders can consciously use new ways of thinking, to achieve new ways of acting, have they learned Cognitive Self Change. Then, and only then, are they in a position to make a real choice.



SELF CHANGE

- ❖ *CSC consists of a series of skills*
- ❖ *These do not imply 'deficits' in the offender*
- ❖ *The skills are the skills of self change*
- ❖ *Attainment of competencies is taken seriously - participants cannot simply 'jump through the hoops'.*

Task-based Delivery

The objective of Cognitive Self Change is to reduce offenders' risk to reoffend. The means of reducing that risk is to teach offenders the ability to avoid violent and criminal behaviour, by re-directing their thinking—and to experience self-worth in doing so. As with any correctional change program, CSC needs to address the question of how we measure participant progress and how to determine that a participant has finished the program.

Commonly, in correctional programs, group facilitators generally form opinions of a participant's progress toward change based on their observations of the participant in and out of group. Does the participant do the assigned work? Are they enthusiastic? Do they express pro-social attitudes? Do they seem to be 'internalising' the messages and values of the program? Such 'clinical observations' of individual participants are very important. They can help the facilitator apply the program to the personal characteristics of each individual. But 'clinical intuition' is notoriously unreliable in predicting future criminal behaviour (Monahan & Steadman, 1994).

Perhaps even more importantly, subjective assessment of progress—when used as a criteria of progress toward completion—sets up an unhealthy dynamic between participant and staff. The dependency of participants on the absolute authority of staff judgment creates an adversarial competition. Participants have a vested interest in convincing staff they have changed. Staff have a vested interest in not being deceived. Program-wise offenders can learn to ‘look good’ in any program. In response, program staff can become so conservative in their clinical judgments that hardly anyone completes the program. The opposite problem – staff being overly lenient to gain approval of offenders – can lead to offenders progressing through the program when they haven’t achieved the competency of earlier steps. This is akin to the handyman who applies paint without adequately preparing the surface, or the builder who does not prepare a solid foundation – the process fails.

The attempt to force a person to change, triggers resistance to change (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). Skills programs, including Cognitive Self Change, attempt to avoid this resistance by presenting the program, not as a demand to change, but as teaching a set of skills participant’s can use to run their own lives. The message of CSC is, “We don’t try to make you change. But we insist you learn how to change.”

In the past, Cognitive Self Change used competency in the basic skills of CSC as a criterion of progress. But, in practice, it is difficult to assess these skills objectively. Determining that a participant has demonstrated these skills is almost as elusive and subjective as the judgement that they ‘have changed.’

For all these reasons, Cognitive Self Change has developed task-based criteria of progress and program completion. The basic requirement of CSC is to complete a set of well-defined tasks: mainly thinking reports and cognitive check-ins. In addition, individual tasks are prescribed to meet the special learning requirements of individual group members. When a participant has satisfactorily completed the tasks assigned to them, they are credited with satisfactory progress for that step. This task-based criterion does not eliminate staff judgement (satisfactory or unsatisfactory is a value judgement), but it does operationalize the criteria of progress. Participants know in advance what is expected of them and what they need to do to complete the program. At the same time, staff maintain control of the quality of program participation. Participants can’t get through the program by simply ‘jumping through the hoops.’ In fact, our task-based criteria provide an effective tool for assuring that each participant derives the utmost benefit from their participation in the program. In effect, participants who try to ‘jump through the hoops’ cannot succeed unless they produce the personalised material that CSC requires. Unlike other programs, there is no simple script they can memorise and repeat back to the fa-

cilitators. It is often the case that thinking which will work for one participant, will be totally ineffective for another participant – it is individualised.

When staff facilitators believe that a participant is not reducing their risk to reoffend—by subjective intuition or for any other reason—those staff have the responsibility to design and prescribe a special task for that participant that will expose that area of risk, and provide a means of reducing it.

Often, the prescribed task will consist of thinking reports on specific areas of a participant’s resistance to change. It will take ingenuity to design appropriate tasks, but this is an appropriate staff responsibility. In CSC we do not assume that participants are motivated to change. In fact we assume the opposite. Our strategy is to challenge our participants to perform concrete assigned tasks, or choose to drop out of the program. Part of that strategy is to design and focus prescribed tasks so explicitly on a participant’s resistance to reduce their risk that it is practically impossible to complete them without applying the skills of CSC to their own resistance.

The same strategy applies, whenever staff believe that a participant is not learning and demonstrating these skills, either in group or in real life practice. Staff then have the responsi-

bility to design and prescribe a special task that will expose the deficit of skill performance, and teach the required skill.

In general, any perceived deficiency of program performance is to be challenged with a prescribed task or series of tasks that will—if and when they are completed—remedy that deficiency.

Reverse Onus

Many high-risk offenders do not want to change—they are ‘unmotivated’. Consequently, facilitators in CSC and other programs, can fall into the trap of trying to cajole the participants into doing the work, or doing it better. This then means that progress is dependent on the facilitators working harder.

CSC resolves this problem by laying the responsibility at the feet of the participants. While we will offer all possible assistance, it is their responsibility to convince us (and the other participants) what their thinking was (Step 1), which thinking pushes them towards offending (Step 2), that their new thinking could work (Step 3) and that they are capable of doing it, when it counts (Step 4).

While this ultimately falls back on the Strategy of Choices (see Section 9), it mostly relies on facilitators recognising who

is responsible for what. Rather than us convincing them to do the work, they need to convince us that they can:

*“I don’t understand where you got the permission to hit him. What did you think that led to you throwing the first punch” (Step 1);

*“I don’t get it. Explain to me again how that thought pushes you to offend” (Step 2);

*“How would you feel good about yourself if you said you would just walk away? You’ve always said a real man never walks away from a fight” (Step 3);

*“You’ve said this new thinking will work for you. How is it that you’re still breaking rules on a regular basis?”

Review 2.2 Task-based Delivery

Which of the following statements are true about CSC?

- A.** It is important to get all the tasks done as quickly as possible
- B.** The tasks are not necessary if the participant already ‘gets it’
- C.** Tasks allow facilitators to assess whether a participant has gained each skill
- D.** Every participant will complete the same number of tasks

[Check Answer](#)

GROUP RULES

Rules of conduct for group members are those rules required to conduct groups in an orderly and effective way. The rules of conduct for Cognitive Self Change are simple and basic:

❖ 1) Be respectful

Respect is unconditional. This means that respect is to be shown whether or not we agree with or like or approve of a person and whether or not we perceive that person as respecting us.

❖ 2) Participate constructively

This means to engage in group processes and discussions to actively help other group members learn and practice the skills of CSC.

❖ 3) Be punctual

SECTION 8

Program Rules

The concept of rules is a difficult one to present to antisocial offenders. CSC attempts to teach offenders self-responsibility, with the aim that they take responsibility for all their actions including those they perform in their head. This is different to trying to get them to 'do the right thing' i.e. obey the rules. In fact, when we devote our energy to trying to elicit their compliance to rules we can achieve the opposite of getting them to accept responsibility for their actions, as they see their behaviour as coerced and not truly their own. If they rebel and refuse to comply with our coercion, they see their rebellion as what they had to do in order to avoid being controlled by us. In their minds the only way their actions can be their own is if they rebel against authority.

Therefore, whether they comply or rebel, they avoid responsibility.

In other programs, staff try to avoid the coercion element by asking the group to come up with the rules. A difficulty with this

democratic approach is that offenders lose the critical opportunity for consciously accepting the authority or rules. It can also blur the real nature of rules and authority – we accept social rules, not because we helped make them, but because we identify ourselves with the society they make possible.

In CSC we need to adopt a strategy specifically developed for offenders with deeply set antisocial patterns of thinking. This is called the ‘Strategy of Choices’ as it involves presenting the offender with the need to choose. In order to do this effectively facilitators need to:

- *Understand the principles behind the program and the rules of the program very clearly.
- *Understand the offenders’ point of view, which includes a deep-seated scepticism towards authority, and a defiant and often hostile approach to interactions with the criminal justice system. Note: facilitators do not need to sympathise with this viewpoint – they need to understand it.

When discussing the group rules with an offender it is important that you adhere to the Strategy of Choices:

- *Define the rules, conditions and standards. It is important that you present them simply as the conditions for participation in the group, and avoid any inference that they represent a power struggle over us trying to control them and them trying to control themselves. Emphasise that you will support their success in the program;

- *Make them choose: consciously and deliberately. They can meet these conditions and participate, or not meet them and drop out. Either way they are accepting responsibility for their actions; and

- *Follow through with their choice.

You should explain the group rules in terms of their content, rationale or meaning and how they will be enforced.

The assigned tasks of Cognitive Self Change are designed to assure that any participant who completes them satisfactorily will both learn and demonstrate the skills of CSC.

Satisfactory performance of an assigned task must display a genuine effort to accomplish the purpose of the assigned task, defined in terms of these basic steps of CSC. Performance that merely ‘goes through the motions’ is not satisfactory. It’s the responsibility of staff facilitators to make this judgement. When they judge performance to be unsatisfactory they must apply the ‘3x3 strategy’ explained below.

Assigned tasks in CSC are thinking reports, check-ins, and journal assignments. Some of these tasks are prescribed for all participants. Others are prescribed by facilitators for individual participants.

Performance of the assigned tasks of CSC in a satisfactory manner is the basic requirement of the program. When a participant's performance of assigned tasks indicates they have

Standards of performance

Standards of performance are the quantitative and qualitative standards for program participation. They are:

1) Maintain an open channel of communication.

This means being willing to learn and practice objective observation and reporting of one's thoughts and feelings, without censorship or deliberate distortion. It means not keeping areas of one's thinking and behaviour secret if it is related to a risk of criminal behaviour.

2) Do assigned tasks.

Cognitive Self Change is a cognitive skill composed of 4 sub-skills:

1) Learn how to observe your thinking;

2) Learn how to recognize when your thinking is leading you to crime or violence;

3) Learn to find new thinking that doesn't lead you to break rules and allows you to feel good about yourself while doing this; and

4) Practice using new thinking to support new behaviours until you can do it when it matters most.

not learned the associated skill, facilitators will design special tasks to help and/or challenge the participant to learn and demonstrate the level of skill appropriate to their place in the program.

When a participant persistently fails to perform assigned tasks the program team must decide whether this failure is due to the participant's inability to perform or their lack of effort to perform. In the former case, the participant is terminated from CSC with the recommendation to the participant's caseworker that the participant be referred to an alternative form of program – this is quite rare! It is the position of CSC that no offender should be penalized for an honest inability to perform the CSC program. In the latter case, the participant is terminated from CSC without such a recommendation.

Correctional systems implementing CSC (or any other program for that matter) need to be careful that the consequences are such that antisocial behaviour is not inadvertently rewarded. In some jurisdictions, the consequence has been to remove the offender's obligation to attend the program with no adverse consequences. As well as reinforcing the antisocial behaviour of that particular offender, this has an adverse consequence on the participants who remain in the program.

The 3 x 3 strategy of enforcing rules and standards

The Rules and Standards of Performance define the basic conditions for CSC to be effective. Participants who refuse to accept the rules and conditions are refusing to participate in the program, and this should be explained to them in just this way. When participants fail to live up to rules or conditions, we use this opportunity to create a ‘crisis of choice’ in which they are confronted with the need to make a fresh choice, here and now: reject the conditions and withdraw from the program or make a new commitment to accept them and remain in the program. We don’t make a major crisis out of every small transgression, but we do confront participants with the need to make a choice, even with small transgressions. In this way we use conscious choices as stepping stones toward change.

This strategy is an application of the Strategy of Choices described [later](#). The 3-parts of the 3x3 communication are:

- *The participant is clearly informed of the rule or standard;
- *The participant is challenged to make a conscious decision and deliberate choice: to accept the rule or standard or reject it; and
- *Staff act on the participant’s decision.

This 3-part communication is applied at 3 distinct times (hence “3 x 3”):

- *Before a violation or performance failure;
- *At the time of the violation or performance failure; and
- *After the violation or performance failure.

Examples:

1. Participants are informed of the rules and program standards of performance at the time of their initial interview. They are explicitly asked if they agree to abide by them. If they do, they meet this qualification for acceptance to the program. If they don’t (their rejection may be expressed by their behaviour or their words), they are not accepted to the program.
2. If and when a participant breaks a rule (example: being disrespectful to a staff or group member), that participant is reminded of the rule and challenged to make a decision, here and now, whether to abide by that rule. The reminder may be low key and non-confrontational, but it must be clear. And the participant must clearly be put on the spot of making a conscious decision. If the decision is positive (in the judgment of the staff) the group continues with that participant’s participation. If it is negative, the participant is asked to leave the group meeting.
3. Finally, staff meet with that participant individually, before the next group session. He is asked to review his decision and

re-commit himself to the program. That commitment is defined explicitly in terms of the rule or standard in question. Once again, staff act on the participant's decision.

This strategy places responsibility for what happens with the participant. Participants are made to experience their participation or non-participation as their own conscious decision, not as a decision imposed by an external authority. The basic consequence for deciding not to comply with the rules or standards is removal from the program, but staff present the 3x3 strategy without being threatening. Even if a participant verbally expresses compliance staff may have reason to doubt their sincerity. In some cases special conditions may be added to the participant's continued participation that allow them to demonstrate their sincerity and also protect the integrity of the group.

The same strategy applies to maintaining quality standards of program performance, even though quality standards are seldom as 'black and white' as rules violations. Every participant is informed of the standards and challenged to make a commitment to them before they enter the program.

If and when it appears that a participant is failing to perform up to a program standard, the participant must be counselled by the staff facilitators. That counselling consists of reminding that participant of the standard, pointing out exactly how

they are failing to meet it, and challenging them once again to decide if they intend to meet it. If their response is positive (in staff's judgment), they continue in the program—perhaps with special conditions, as above. If not, they are dropped from the program.

Removal from the program is always tied to the participant's deliberate decision. When they are informed of the decision to remove them from the program, they are also informed of the new decisions they must make to get back in, and the tasks they must perform to demonstrate that they have made these decisions. Participants are never removed from the program without explicit directions as to the conditions they can and must meet for re-admission to the program.

The 3 x 3 strategy puts a special burden of judgment on staff. They must constantly evaluate whether or not a participant is genuinely committing themselves to the rules and conditions of the program. This is a very appropriate judgment for staff to make. The decision to remove a participant should always include a review of the participant's overall performance in group and should consider any special or extenuating circumstances connected with their failure to perform.

Program Interventions

Violations of program rules and failure to meet program standards are dealt with by special program interventions.

The lowest level of program intervention—for both program rules violations and failure to perform up to program standards—is a personal conference between program staff and the participant. The participant is informed of the rule or standard, presented with their failure to meet it and challenged to make a fresh decision. Even though the consequence of a negative decision is severe (removal from the program), the encounter itself is brief and verbal. In almost all cases the outcome will be positive. In those cases in which a participant decides—deliberately and consciously—to reject the rules or conditions, their removal from the program is the consequence of that decision, not the consequence of their violation behaviour.

Application of this strategy requires staff judgment and good sense. If for instance, a participant tells staff to “stuff your damned program”, that response may express the emotion of the moment and not a deliberate decision. Good judgment may call for a new conference after emotions have cooled down.

Staff should apply the 3 x 3 strategy for every significant violation and failure to meet standards. This means having a

conference with the offender at the time of and/or soon after every violation. These conferences need not be long or complicated. Some may be as brief as a few seconds—just enough to focus the participant’s attention and force a new conscious decision.

A second level of special program intervention is a documented special journal assignment that challenges the participant to learn and demonstrate their ability and willingness to meet the relevant rule or standard. The assignments often take the form of a Thinking Report and focus on the particular rule or rules that the participant was breaking.

A third level of special program intervention is suspension from the program. Suspension is used only when a participant has repeatedly failed to respond to 3x3 intervention, but staff still have reason to believe the participant can succeed in CSC. Suspensions should be for no longer than 30 days and must always include journal assignments that challenge the participant’s performance at least as strongly as normal participation in CSC groups. These assignments should be designed to demonstrate that the participant is ready to resume regular participation in the group.

The content of the rules:

- *Keep an open channel of communication;
- *Be respectful (all the time, no matter what);
- *Complete assignments, attend all groups and be punctual;
and
- *Participate constructively in groups.

The rationale of the rules:

These are the conditions necessary for people to co-operate together in a common activity. It is not 'us versus them', it's the way we can work as a collective 'us'. There is nothing coercive about the rules; people are free not to participate, but no one has the right to disrupt the participation of others. Explain that your job as a member of staff includes the responsibility for assuring these conditions are met.

Review 2.3 Program Rules

Which of the following are true about CSC?

- A.** Program rules mirror society's rules
- B.** The rules are negotiated with the participants
- C.** The rules should be changed if the participants are having trouble following them
- D.** Breaching the rules results in an automatic suspension from CSC

Check Answer

Strategy of Choices

The attitudes a person has toward rules and authority is obviously critical to whether they live responsibly or criminally. The Strategy of Choices challenges each participant to make conscious and deliberate choices about these key attitudes.

Authority can be defined in terms of rules and consequences. We present rules and consequences to offenders in a way that respects their right and ability to make their own choices, including the choice of whether or not they will follow these rules. This may sound naïve, even contradictory, but it is not. The fact is, of course, that no matter what we say or do, offenders do have a choice about how they will respond to what we say and do. The history of antisocial behaviour proves the ability of determined offenders to remain defiant, even in the face of severe punishment. We present rules and the consequences for breaking these rules objectively, without coercion, threats, moral judgment or condemnation. But we present them clearly and enforce them strictly.



STRATEGY OF CHOICES

- ❖ *Define rules, requirements, standards, and consequences for failing to meet them objectively.*
- ❖ *Present real options (including the option to reject the rules and not participate) and support positive choices..*
- ❖ *Challenge the participant to make a deliberate and conscious choice. Insist that they choose.*
- ❖ *Respect their choice, and follow through with appropriate consequences.*

We present our authority with this message:

We respect your right to choose. How you respond to the rules we lay down is up to you. Whichever way you choose we will respond to your choice, either by working to support your success or by enforcing consequences.

We want to teach a new meaning (new to them) to the ideas of authority and rules. And we want them to make adherence to rules and standards their own conscious decision.

Most offenders think of authority strictly in terms of power. Rules, in their mind, are simply the imposition of the will of people in power on those without power. This concept of authority gives them moral permission to break rules whenever they can get away with it.

We teach a different conception of authority and rules:

Rules are the conditions necessary for people to work and live in cooperation with each other.

The rules of Cognitive Self Change are those conditions necessary for the program to function and be effective. The rules of an institution are those conditions necessary for the institution to function safely and efficiently. The rules of society are those conditions necessary for people to live with each other.

And the natural consequence for refusing to follow the rules of a group is to be excluded from taking part in that group.

You can choose to disregard rules of the group and be excluded from the group, or you can accept the rules and participate in the group. That is your choice to make. But you cannot take part in the group and disregard its rules. That is our choice to make.

This concept of authority replaces moral condemnation and coercion with an objective choice. We call this The Strategy of Choices.

The Strategy of Choices has 4 parts:

*Define rules, requirements, standards, and consequences for failing to meet them objectively. Without threats. Without coercion.

*Present real options (including the option to reject the rules and not participate) and support positive choices. Make it clear that by choosing the positive option you will join with them to help them succeed in that option.

*Challenge the participant to make a deliberate and conscious choice. Insist that they choose (remembering that their answer in words may not be consistent with their answer in behaviour).

*Respect their choice, and follow through with appropriate consequences. Support responsible choices. Impose consequences for antisocial choices. Avoid condemnation and blame: “It’s nothing personal.”

The idea is to present authority and responsibility in the form of a choice, while in the same voice you present positive options and personal support for these positive options. We are not just challenging their thinking, we are challenging their acts of will. To make a choice consciously and deliberately is to recognize and accept your own responsibility for that choice. To comply with rules out of fear is to assign responsibility for your compliance to someone else. Our goal is to teach self-responsibility. The compliance we want is motivated by internal choice, not fear.

Cognitive Self Change uses the Strategy of Choices throughout the program.

Example: We make the general demand that participants make an honest effort to learn the Steps of Cognitive Self Change. Even though the threat of exclusion from the program is usually kept far in the background, staff and participants are aware that a basic decision not to learn and practice these steps—whether that decision is expressed explicitly or implicitly—is equivalent to resigning from the program. At critical moments non-performing participants need to be reminded that performance of each Step — really and truly

— is a requirement of the program. They need to be challenged to choose: Stay with us and meet our conditions, or reject our conditions and don’t stay with us.

Example: A participant may act rudely during group meetings. He needs to be reminded that showing respect for others, always and unconditionally, is a necessary condition for the group to function and accomplish its purpose. The participant needs to be challenged to choose: Stay with us and meet our conditions, or reject our conditions and don’t stay with us.

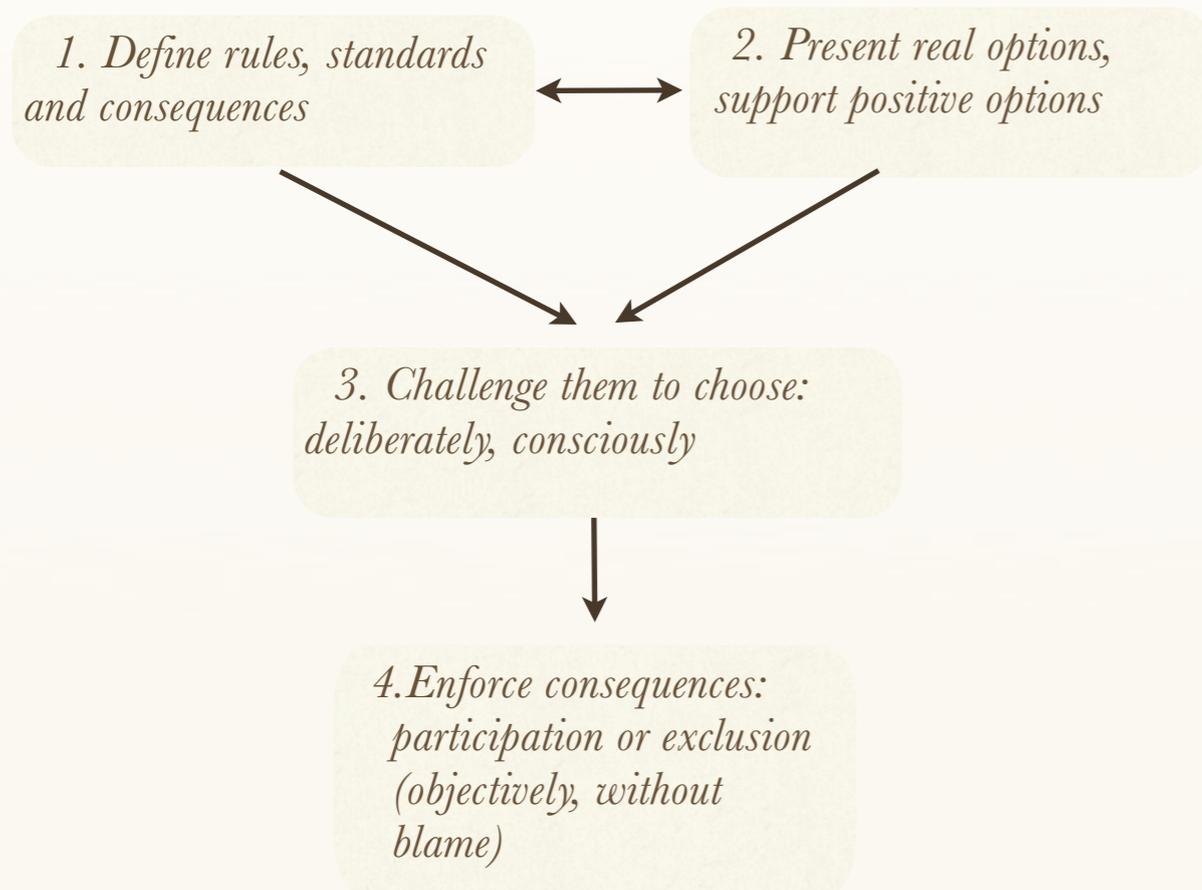
Example: A participant is repeatedly late to group or fails to do assignments. They need to understand that their performance violates a basic condition for the program to be effective. We challenge them to choose: Stay with us and meet our conditions, or reject our conditions and don’t stay with us.

In every case, the objective is not simply compliance. It is to make the participant conscious that the decision to accept or reject the rules is their own choice. Unless we convey our positive support for their success as strongly as we convey the rules and consequences, and unless we really put them on the spot and make them choose, consciously and deliberately, the participant will simply respond to our threat—with no conscious awareness of their own responsibility in choosing their own behaviour.

The Strategy of Choices is at the heart of Cognitive Self Change. We could call it a therapeutic use of authority and control.

A series of positive choices will lead an offender, step by step, into full, pro-social participation in society. A series of negative choices will lead them deeper and deeper into trouble. But even the deepest, hardest-core offender is confronted with the choice—and the opportunity—to take the first step back into society.

Strategy of Choices Diagram



Review 2.4 Strategy of Choices

Which of the following are true about the Strategy of Choices?

- A.** Facilitators should try to persuade participants to stay in group
- B.** Participants need to choose to follow the rules
- C.** The Strategy of Choices forces participants to comply
- D.** The Strategy of Choices assists participants to learn that they make choices

Check Answer

Chapter 3

THINKING REPORTS

Thinking Reports are the key tool used in CSC.

A Thinking Report has four parts:

1. Situation
2. Thoughts
3. Feelings
4. Underlying Rules/Principles



Introduction to Thinking Reports

A Thinking Report is an objective report of what was going through a person's mind during a given situation or at a given moment in time. Learning to do Thinking Reports is a major part of learning Step 1 of Cognitive Self Change: paying attention to your thoughts and feelings, attitudes and beliefs. Thinking Reports also form the basis of learning and practicing the other Steps of Cognitive Self Change.

A Thinking Report has 4 parts:

1. The Situation. This is not a report of thinking but describes the situation where the thinking took place. This part of the Thinking Report should be brief and objective—stating the facts of the situation and including the behaviour done in that situation by the person giving the Thinking Report. The person's opinions and feelings about the situation are given in parts 2, 3 and 4 of the Thinking Report.

2. Thoughts. This is a list of all the thoughts the person can remember having during the given situation or moment of

time. A Thinking Report presents a person's thoughts as pure, objective information. Criticism of the thinking, or excuses for the thinking, are not appropriate in a Thinking Report.

3. Feelings. This is a list of all the feelings the person can remember having during the given situation or moment of time. Like the thoughts, the feelings are presented as pure, objective information.

4. Underlying Rules/Principles. This is a description of the more basic level of a person's thinking—their 'background' thinking. Underlying rules can be defined as our general way of thinking about a kind of person or kind of situation or about the way we think things should be. Or we can define underlying rules as "the thinking behind our particular thoughts and feelings."

Thinking Reports are usually written on a single page – generally on a whiteboard or flipchart. We use the following format:

Situation:

Thoughts:

Feelings:

Underlying Rules/Principles:

Here is an example of an offender's Thinking Report. This example is quite brief and is what we call a "Draft Thinking Report." When a Draft Thinking Report is presented during group, the whole group spends at least a few minutes helping the person remember more thoughts, more feelings, and more underlying rules and principles. These are then added to the Thinking Report.

Sit: An officer told me to pick up a piece of paper on the floor at chow. I got angry and cursed at him. I got a disciplinary report for disrespect and disobeying a direct order.

Th:

1. Fuck you, you fucking want-to-be cop.
2. If you want it picked up bad enough, pick it up yourself.
3. I have a good mind to drive you right where you stand.
4. If you ask me instead of telling me then maybe I'd pick it up, asshole.
5. You're nothing but a 4-eyed piece of shit.

F: anger, victimized, singled out

Rules: Cops are assholes. I have a right to be respected.



THINKING REPORTS

- ❖ *Thinking Reports are the basic process for learning the skills of Cognitive Self Change*
- ❖ *Thinking Reports are expanded as the participant progresses through the program*
- ❖ *In Stage One, participants learn to report their thinking*
- ❖ *In Stage Two the connections between their thoughts and rule breaking is explored*
- ❖ *In Stage Three alternatives are explored*
- ❖ *In Stage Four, the alternative ways of thinking are practiced until they can be used in a variety of situations*

Using Thinking Reports to Practice CSC

Presentation of Thinking Reports during group is the basic process for learning the skills of Cognitive Self Change. Cognitive Check-ins and Journal Assignments provide practice of these skills, but the systematic learning of how to do each step gets its fullest attention in group presentation of Thinking Reports.

Thinking Reports are presented in practically every group.

The four parts of a Thinking Report are described in the previous section. This section describes the four steps of presenting a Thinking Report during group. Participants will learn to present each step in turn, and will not be permitted to present any step until they have satisfactorily performed each previous step. This is reflected in the structure of CSC as Stage One members will only present the first step, Stage Two members will present the first two steps and so on.

The four steps mirror the four skills of Cognitive Self Change:

Step 1: Report the full content of your thoughts, feelings, underlying rules and principles.

Step 2: Identify how your thoughts, feelings, underlying rules and principles led you to do, or put you at risk of doing, something hurtful, violent, or criminal. (In the jargon of CSC, this is called “identify the risk in your thinking.”)

Step 3: Find new thinking that reduces that risk, but allows you to feel good about yourself.

Step 4. Practice using this new thinking.

Presentation of Thinking Reports generally takes most of a group period. This limits the number of opportunities each member has to present a Thinking Report. For this reason, Thinking Reports focus on significant criminal, violent or hurtful behaviours. (Occasionally a Thinking Report may be presented on a situation where a person’s thinking put them at risk of doing such a behaviour without actually doing it.) Every participant is required to present a Thinking Report on their current criminal offence during Stage One. Thinking Reports presented in Stage One should include all significant types of violence the participant has done in the past, such as domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Staff should feel reasonably confident that a participant can objectively report his thinking and behaviour before he is allowed to move to Stage Two of the program.

Thinking Reports may be prepared before group or done entirely within the group. They are presented to the group on the whiteboard (or a flip chart/OHP) where it can be seen by the whole group. The initial written report is called a Draft Thinking Report. Draft Thinking Reports are the starting point. They are not expected to be complete. Step 1 of the Thinking Report Process is devoted to pulling out more thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs. A brief, sketchy Draft Thinking Report can even be desirable, because it makes Step 1 all the more productive and meaningful and gets the whole group engaged with the person’s Thinking Report.

Facilitators begin the thinking report process by asking the participant presenting their report to give an informal narrative account of what was happening and what was done by him and others in the situation being reported. This is not part of the formal Thinking Report: It sets the stage. Enough information should be presented here to get an idea of what happened and what the situation meant to the participant, but limit the time to about 1 minute.

Facilitators then begin the formal process by asking the participant to read his report just as it is written on the white-

board. This focuses everyone’s attention on the content of the Draft Thinking Report and helps the person adopt an objective frame of mind toward the content of their report.

The group then proceeds through steps 1—4 in turn, but without going beyond the participant’s ability to perform each step. That is, we never ask a participant to perform the next step until they have succeeded in each previous step. This is called “the principle of progression.” For example, a participant in Stage Two is required to present the Thinking Report and then identify the thinking that led to the violence or harm, but not to progress to Step 3, finding new thinking.

Step 1: Get more content.

Objective: To learn how to look carefully and objectively at one’s own thinking.

Process:

- *The participant presenting their draft Thinking Report is challenged to identify more thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs than are already included in the draft TR.
- *All group members focus their attention on the experience in the mind of this person at this time and place, and actively help the person find missing pieces of thinking and feelings, attitudes and beliefs.

*The person is challenged to find more meaning and more content. The process is active and persistent.

*The person is asked questions to pull out more content in their draft TR. Examples:

- “Looking at the report as it is, can you remember any more thoughts (or feelings or attitudes or beliefs) you were having at the time?”
- “I’m not sure exactly what you mean by this thought (feeling, underlying rule, principle). Can you explain it to me?”
- “What was the very first thought (or feeling) you had when ____ happened?”
- “Did these thoughts go together with particular feelings? Tell me how they fit together?”
- “Was there a feeling that went with this thought?”, “...a thought that went with this feeling?”
- “Was there a thought or feeling you had that fit in between the one’s you have listed?”
- “Was there a kind of underlying rule behind these thoughts (and feelings)? What would that rule sound like?”
- “Do you have a general principle about this kind of situation (or person or action)? What does that principle sound like?”

Example: in the sample Thinking Report presented earlier, the person might identify the following extra information, indicated by underline:

Sit: An officer told me to pick up a piece of paper on the floor at chow. I got angry and cursed at him. I got a disciplinary report for disrespect and disobeying a direct order.

Th: 1. Fuck you, you fucking want-to-be cop.

2. If you want it picked up bad enough, pick it up yourself.

2a. You get off on telling people what to do.

3. I have a good mind to drive you right where you stand.

4. If you ask me instead of telling me then maybe I'd pick it up, asshole.

5. You're nothing but a 4-eyed piece of shit.

6. I'm sick of being insulted around here.

7. All these cops are alike.

8. I can't take any more of this shit.

F: anger, victimized, singled out. Belittled. Disrespected.

Rules: Cops are assholes. I have a right to be respected. The only way to get respect is to let people know you'll hurt them if they don't. Without the ability to be violent, no one will respect you. When someone orders me to do something, they are disrespecting me.

Group members are assigned the role of co-facilitators. Group members are taught to facilitate the process in the same way staff do. Staff should encourage group members to ask most of the questions. Staff can then concentrate on making sure the process stays strictly on track.

Example: Ask group members: "Does this look like it was all the thoughts and feelings the person was having? What could you ask him to help him remember more?"

Example: Get group members to ask your questions. For instance, if you think a particular thought as written in the draft TR may be incomplete, try asking another group member, "Do you understand exactly what _____ meant by this thought? What can you ask him to understand it better?"

Facilitators must judge when and if it is time to move on to Step 2. Consider these questions:

- *Has this person has achieved good objectivity in reporting their thinking?
- *Have they presented enough content to capture the most important meanings of their experience?
- *Is the connection between the way they thought and the way they acted beginning to be clear?
- *Ask the group if they are satisfied with the objectivity and the content.

If you and the group are satisfied, and if there is enough time, and if the person is at Stage Two or higher, go on to Step 2.

Step 2: Uncover the risk in the thinking.

Objective: To learn the ability to recognize how one's thinking leads to violent and criminal behaviour.

Process:

- *The participant presenting their TR is challenged to identify exactly how their thinking led to their violent or criminal behaviour.
- *Every group member is actively engaged in “solving the puzzle” of how the person's thinking led to their behaviour. But the participant presenting their TR is the final authority.
- *Make a clear transition from Step 1 to Step 2. Say something like, “OK. We have a pretty good picture of how _____ was thinking and feeling. Now let's do Step 2. Let's look at how these thoughts and feelings led to the behaviour.
- *Step 2 requires active staff facilitation. Keep a single-minded focus on the step. Avoid side-tracks into counselling, psychological interpretations, and problem-solving.
- *In Cognitive Self Change, thinking that leads to violence or crime is called “risky thinking.” Risk always means, risk in the thinking, and always means risk of doing something hurtful to someone else or breaking a rule. There is a tendency to use “risk” to mean risk in the situation, or risk of something happening to the person. Watch out for these mistakes. Practice catching the slightest deviation from our special meaning of risk, and putting it right back on track.

*Do not settle for vague connections. Get the participant to display the direct connection between their thinking and their behaviour. This awareness achieves self-responsibility—awareness that their behaviour is the result of their own thinking, not the behaviour of other people. It is the awareness that they alone are responsible for what they do. This is the special significance of Step 2. Make them see this connection as clearly and concretely as you can.

Step 2 is performed in 2 stages. Step 2-A consists of identifying which thoughts and rules are risky – thoughts/rules that contribute to rule-breaking behaviour.

Step 2-B starts by identifying the key pieces of the Thinking Report. These are the particular thoughts, feelings, attitudes or beliefs that most directly or most strongly lead a person to perform a hurtful behaviour. Often there are a range of similar thoughts in Step 2-A. In Step 2-B we simplify these by removing duplicate thoughts, and less-important thoughts. A useful question can be: “If you did not have that particular thought, would you have still committed that offence?” If this is the case, then, while it is risky, it is not one of the key pieces.

Step 2-B consists of putting these key pieces together in a series or sequence, showing how each key thought and feeling connects with others and with key attitudes and beliefs to

lead the person toward a destructive action. Step 2-B provides a graphic representation of the logic of the person’s criminal behaviour.

Step 2 consists of seeing—vividly and personally—how one’s thinking led to violence or criminal behaviour. At the end of Step 2 the participant should be able to answer this question clearly and convincingly:

What was the core thinking behind this behaviour?

Often, the core thinking is a simple principle of life, such as “If I want something, I’m going to get it” or “I have a right to do anything I want to.” Sometimes it is helpful to ask the question in those terms:

Is there a core principle or rule behind this behaviour? Or

Society says you shouldn’t do (describe the behaviour). What is your rule that makes it ok?

In order to really appreciate their own responsibility for their thinking, it is also necessary for the participant to relate their thinking in one situation to their thinking—and behaviour—in other situations. They should see the answer to the question:

Is the core thinking behind this act of crime or violence the same as the thinking behind similar acts you have done in the past?

If the answer is yes, we are on the track of finding the core thinking behind this person's history of violence and crime.

Step 2 may sometimes be achieved informally and intuitively, without a strict and formal process. But a structured process can help. It is often useful to use the following sub-steps.

Step 2-A: Identify the risky thinking.

Ask the participant which thoughts pushed him towards the particular behaviour. Underline those thoughts. When he has identified which thoughts are risky, it is helpful to probe about a few of the thoughts:

*Why is that thought risky? How does it push you towards offending?

*Why isn't that thought risky?

Once that is complete, ask the person if any thoughts or feelings, attitudes or beliefs in their Thinking Report stand out in their mind as leading clearly and directly to their behaviour. We call these "key pieces" of their thinking. Ask the person to identify key pieces of their Thinking Report and explain how each piece worked in their mind to lead them to the behaviour. Then circle or highlight each key piece on the Thinking Report. If they find that difficult, you could ask them to identify which of the risky thoughts weren't needed to get to the offence (i.e., ones that aren't key pieces).

Use group members to help identify key pieces. Encourage group members to 'think themselves into' the mind-set of the person presenting the TR.

Ask group members to pick out thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs they think might have led the person to do the hurtful behaviour, and explain why. Then ask the person presenting the Thinking Report if they agree. If they do—and make sure it is real agreement, not just compliance—circle or underline that key piece. If the person does not agree that it is a key piece, leave it and move on, even if you suspect it is an important piece. You can always come back to the point another day, but the participant should never experience staff as dictating the content or significance of their thinking.

Everyone should be engaged in solving the puzzle of risk—in answering the question, How does this person's thinking lead them to this kind of behaviour? Identifying risk should be a kind of game, like solving a puzzle. But the person giving the report is always the final authority about the risk in their own thinking. They decide which guesses count.

Finally, make a judgment whether enough key pieces have been identified to proceed to Step 2-B

Example: in the sample Thinking Report presented earlier, the person might identify the following key pieces, indicated by bold type:

Sit: An officer told me to pick up a piece of paper on the floor at chow. I got angry and cursed at him. I got a disciplinary report for disrespect and disobeying a direct order.

Th: 1. **Fuck you, you fucking want-to-be cop.**

2. If you want it picked up bad enough, pick it up yourself.

2a. **You get off on telling people what to do.**

3. I have a good mind to drive you right where you stand.

4. If you ask me instead of telling me then maybe I'd pick it up, asshole.

5. You're nothing but a 4-eyed piece of shit.

6. **I'm sick of being insulted around here.**

7. All these cops are alike.

8. **I can't take any more of this shit.**

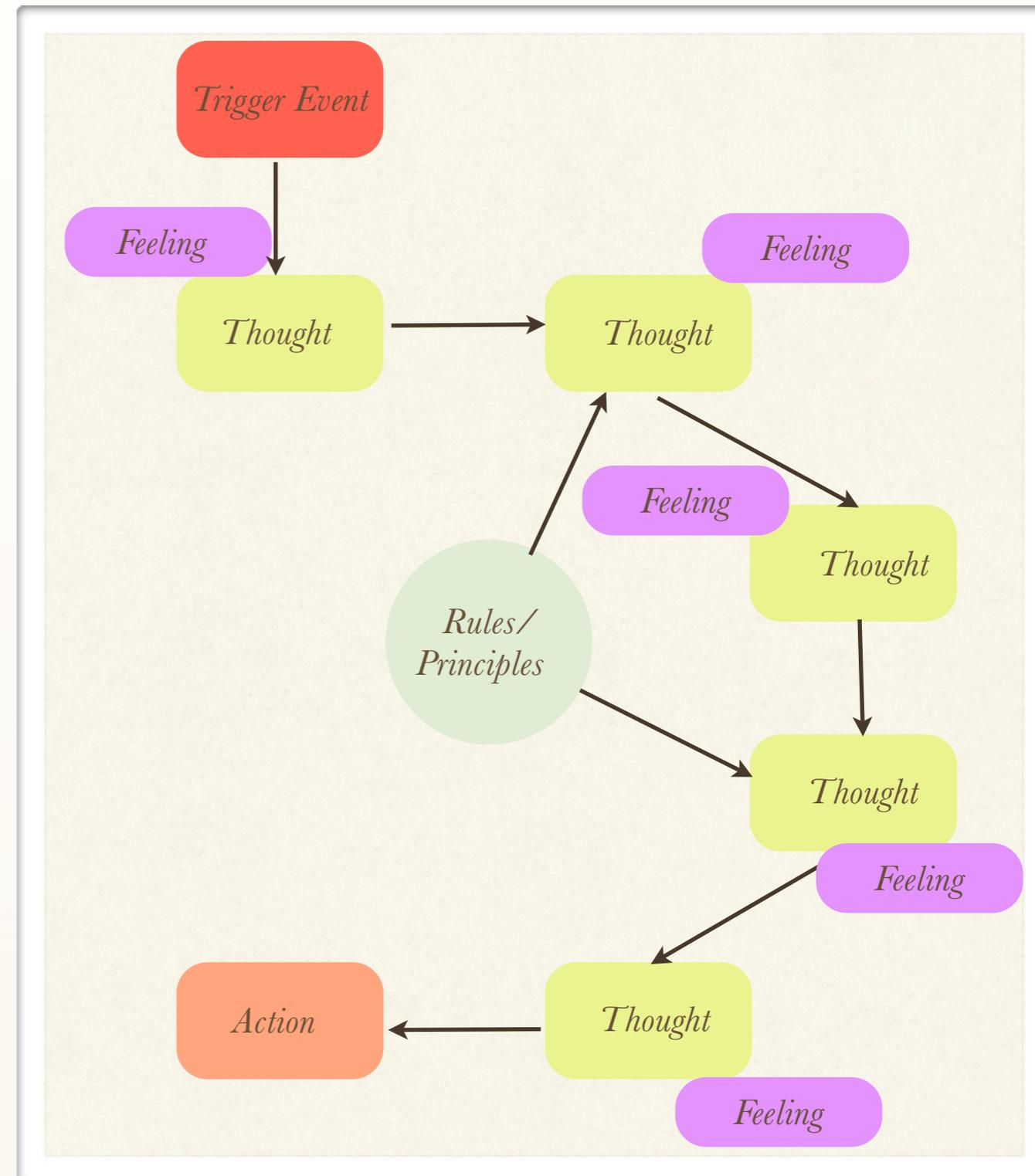
F: **anger, victimized**, singled out. Belittled.

Disrespected.

Rules: Cops are assholes. I have a right to be respected. The only way to get respect is to let people know you'll hurt them if they don't. Without the ability to be violent, no one will respect you. **When someone orders me to do something, they are disrespecting me.**

Step 2-B: Put the key pieces together in a circle or sequence

The form of a Risk Cycle or sequence is:



In individual Thinking Reports the cycle or sequence ends with the real or potential hurtful action. We also do thematic Risk Cycles (Themes and Patterns) after a participant has done several Thinking Reports. These thematic Risk Cycles represent the general pattern of thinking that leads a person to crime or violence. In these thematic diagrams, there is a step beyond the hurtful behaviour. Usually this is a restoration of the emotional state that was originally disrupted by the trigger event.

The person giving the report is the final authority on how to fill in the pieces in a cycle or sequence. A staff facilitator or a group member can write the diagram, following the directions of that person.

It is usually fairly easy for a person to identify which key thought or feeling came first (right after the trigger event) and which key thought or feeling came at the end (right before they did the hurtful behaviour). The rest of the key pieces usually sort themselves out by taking any two pieces at a time and deciding which one came before the other.

Begin by writing in the trigger event at the top of the whiteboard. Take the trigger event straight from the situation part of the Thinking Report.

Then ask the person, which key thought or feeling came first. Write that thought or feeling in the first position, right after the trigger event.

Then ask if he can identify which key thought or feeling came next, and so on. Write in the key pieces on the diagram as their location is identified.

For each key thought placed in the sequence, ask if a key feeling went along with it. Ask if the feeling came at the same time, or before or after that thought. Put that feeling on the diagram where it fits.

Engage the group. Ask them, “Does this sequence of thoughts and feelings make sense to you? Do you see how this thought and feeling could lead ____to think ____ and feel ____?” Ask group members to guess about the sequence of thoughts and feelings and explain the rationale of their guesses. But always return to the person whose report it is as the final authority.

When all the key thoughts and feelings are connected in order, write in the underlying principles/rules in the centre of the diagram.

Explain that underlying principles/rules are the thinking behind our particular thoughts and feelings. They are the engine that drives the circle.

Ask the person and the group if they can see how these principles/rules relate to the thoughts and feelings around the circle. Ask if they think the attitudes and beliefs help push the circle from one set of thoughts and feelings to the next thoughts and feelings along the circle.

Make sure the person giving the report is the final authority,

Draw arrows from each principle/rule to the places along the circle where they have the most influence. The diagram will begin to resemble a wheel connected by spokes to a hub.

When all this is done, step back and review the whole diagram. Read it or ask a group member to read it, describing the connections represented by arrows.

Ask the participant if this looks like a true picture of how his thoughts and feelings, attitudes and beliefs were working together in this situation. Make adjustments and corrections.

The final diagram should be clear and meaningful to everyone. It should be a clear and convincing picture of how the person's thinking and feelings led them toward a hurtful action. Don't accept simplistic or shallow answers. Challenge the participant and the group to be real.

Step 2B can be skipped when the Thinking Report is very brief. This is often the case with very habitual behaviours, such as an opportunistic theft by a person committed to dishonesty. A theft could be as simple as the following:

Sit: Stole a handbag

Thoughts:

She's not watching her bag

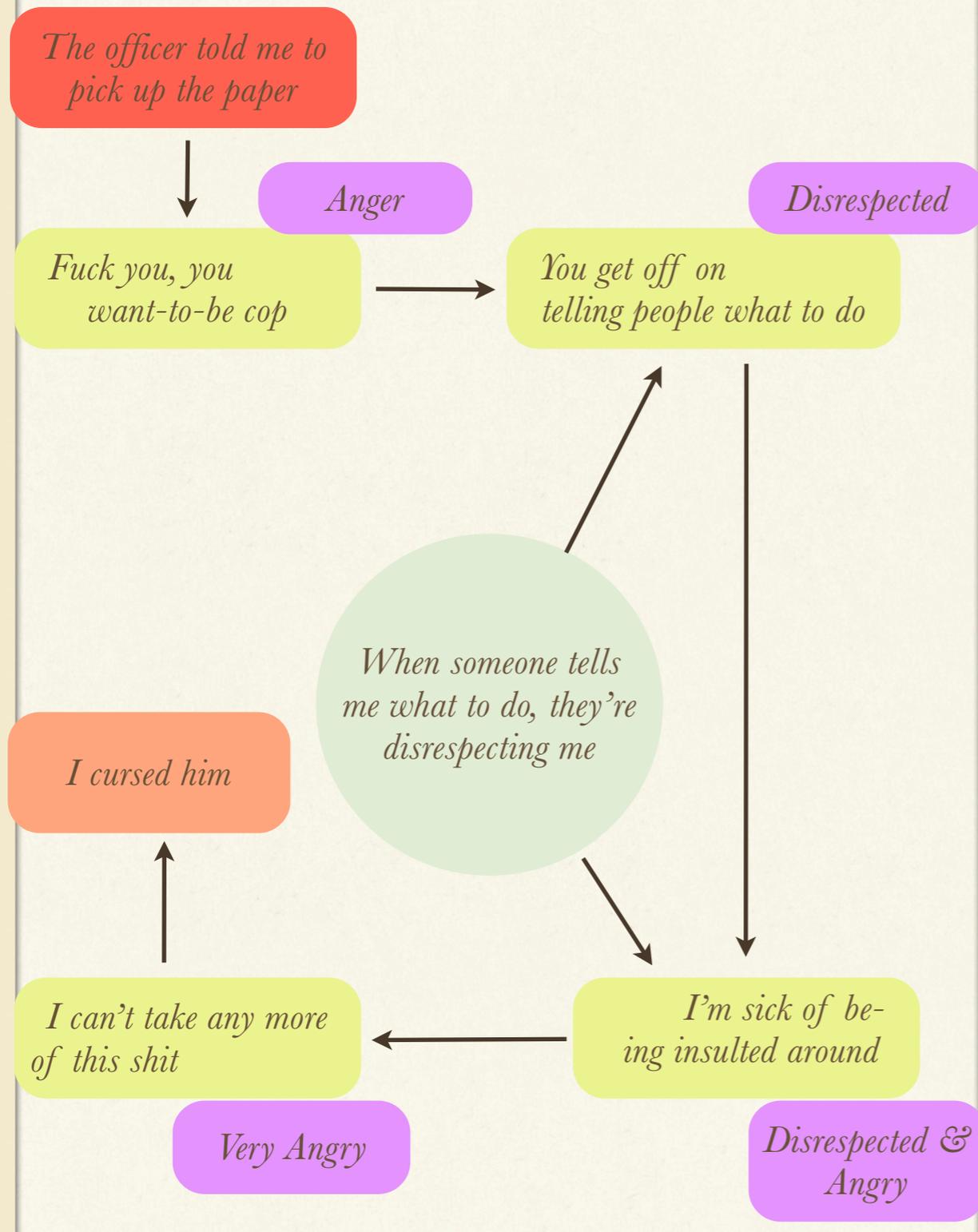
Take it

Feelings: Pleased

Rules: I take what I want

Such a situation is clear as written. Changing it into a diagram doesn't aid understanding, but takes extra time away from other group activities.

Step 2B of the earlier Thinking Report would look like this:



Everyone should be able to recognize how the key attitudes and beliefs relate to the thoughts and feelings along the outside of the circle. Generally, the underlying rules/principles are the engine driving the sequence.

At the end of Step 2-B it can be helpful to ask the two questions that get at the heart and purpose of Step 2:

What was the core thinking behind this behaviour?

and:

Is the core thinking behind this act of crime or violence the same as the thinking behind similar acts you have done in the past?

Make a judgment whether you should continue on to Step 3 by considering these questions:

- *Did the person clearly recognize how their own thinking led to their violent or criminal behaviour?
- *Does the person's other Thinking Report and Check-in work indicate they have a clear understanding of how their thinking leads them to do crime or violence?
- *Is there time in this group session to go on?

If the answers are yes, and the person is in Stage 3 or higher of the program, go on to Step 3.

Step 3: Find new thinking.

Objectives: To be able to think of new ways of thinking that break the thinking habits of the past, that lead away from crime and violence, and that provide the person with a meaningful experience of self-respect and self-worth.

Process:

The participant presenting their report is challenged to identify new thinking they could use in situations similar to this that would:

- 1) reduce his risk of hurtful behaviour; and
- 2) maintain a sense of self-respect/feel good about himself.

In CSC, new thinking is called an intervention. Facilitators need to pay attention to both criteria of good intervention thinking: 1) reduction of risk and 2) maintenance of self-worth. Many offenders continue to think and act the way they do because they believe it is the only way they can feel good about themselves. It may be the only way they have ever learned to feel good about themselves.

Example: “If I don’t threaten violence, people will take advantage of me and disrespect me. I’d be a punk, a nobody.”

When they shy away from violence or crime they may literally feel that they are a punk, a nobody. The problem of

change for such people is to find new ways of thinking that avoid violence and crime and also keeps their self-respect. This is often a puzzle with no easy or obvious answer. But we cannot shrink from facing the question.

It is sometimes quite difficult for a participant to imagine how they could think otherwise than as they do. Sometimes a participant’s environment and upbringing make criminal ways of thinking seem practically inevitable. Staff need to be able to put themselves in their participant’s shoes. Staff need to be prepared to think their way into the participant’s perspective on the world—to see the world through their eyes—and beginning exactly there, to think their way into a more responsible way of looking at that world. We can’t ignore the special circumstances of the participant’s life. And it’s always possible to find a way of thinking that does justice to those circumstances and also steers away from crime and violence while providing a meaningful experience of self-worth.

The participant chooses their own way, but we are their guide and coach. Our ability to look at the world through their eyes makes the program credible in their mind. The inability—or unwillingness—to do that produces cynicism (even more cynicism than they already have) toward the credibility of people in authority.

Once a (Stage 3 or 4) participant has clearly recognized how their thinking produces their criminal and violent behaviour, and they have clearly identified exactly what that thinking is (Step 2), don't let them off the hook. Keep a single-minded focus on Step 3:

You see the thinking that leads you to crime and violence. Now how are you going to change that thinking to avoid crime and violence?

Other group members are active participants in Step 3. They make suggestions. But the participant must judge for themselves which suggestions are most promising for them.

Remind the group about what we look for in intervention thinking:

- 1) thinking that reduces risk of hurtful behaviour,
- 2) thinking that maintains self-respect/allows them to feel good about themselves.

Remind the group (if necessary or appropriate) that we aren't assuming that the person is motivated to want to change either their thinking or their behaviour. We are simply learning Step 3 of the process: that is to find new thinking that will lead to different behaviour while maintaining self-respect. Whether the person chooses to use that skill after they learn it is another question. But until they learn the skill, they have

no choice to make because their choice will have already been made by their current, automatic habits of thinking.

Remind the group (if necessary or appropriate) that we aren't assuming there is something wrong or distorted or false about the way the person thinks now. But we have clearly identified (in Step 2) that this thinking leads the person to do criminal or violent acts.

Again, we are simply learning a new thinking skill. We are opening up new options for thinking and acting. At the same time, we are not saying that their thinking or their behaviour is OK. (It clearly isn't.) We are taking an objective, non-judgmental point of view in order to help the person learn the skills of Cognitive Self Change. Emphasize that each individual is free to make their own choices. We don't demand that people change. We do demand that everyone learns the skills of Cognitive Self Change skills in order to be able to change.

Begin Step 3 by simply asking the group, "What new thinking could _____ use to steer away from this kind of behaviour, while also letting him feel good about himself?"

Consider each key piece of thinking from the person's Thinking Report or Cycle Diagram in Step 2. For each key thought, ask, "What is a new thought that might reduce the

risk?” For each suggestion from the group, ask the person whose thinking report we are working with, “Do you think that thought might work for you?” Write down every new thought the person agrees might work for him to reduce his risk. If the facilitator does not write these down, the participants may feel they are being manipulated. The person is the sole authority of what will work for them. New thoughts can (should) be challenged, but they should not be dismissed out of hand. The participant should be the one to dismiss potential thoughts, not the facilitators.

A key question to ask about each new thought is “How will you feel good about yourself if you use that thought?” This is very important. If the person cannot feel good about themselves when they use that thought, they will be unlikely to use it regularly – it will only let them avoid crime sometimes, and will build resentment. This is very personalised – a thought that works for one participant may be totally ineffective for another participant. This is why CSC does not have a formulaic set of thoughts that we teach to all participants – if they cannot own the thinking, it will not work.

Remember, it is the participant’s job to convince the rest of the group the new thinking could work. It is not the facilitators’ job to convince him.

Focus on attitudes and beliefs. If the underlying rules don’t change, whatever thoughts we might force onto the surface of our mind are riding against the tide. Sooner or later they’ll give way to our old ways of thinking.

It can be helpful to review each identified new thought and then ask, “What rule would help you to really think these new thoughts, and really mean them?”

Don’t flinch from pressing for profound changes of attitude. Example: A participant may say, “That attitude is cast in stone for me.” Reply: “OK, let’s consider what a new stone would look like.” A participant says, “I can’t imagine thinking different than that. Not in this lifetime.” Reply: “OK. Suppose you could create a different lifetime. What could your thinking be then?”

Sometimes, it is helpful to remind the participant of the fork in the road they face: “If you keep thinking the way you do now, then you will keep offending, with all the consequences that go with that. If you decide, at some point that you want a different outcome, what life rules would you need to achieve that?”

The point is, the kind of change we’re after is often very deep and profound in the lives of our participants. And it is always possible to find new thinking that points to a new way of life.

Everyone is capable of learning to live responsibly, no matter what. For very high risk offenders, this may involve the formulation of a new identity. This can be facilitated by asking “What sort of person ...” questions.

Sometimes profound changes in beliefs and attitudes consists in re-discovering beliefs and attitudes a person learned long ago, but put away on a shelf. Intervention may consist in re-activating these beliefs and attitudes. They discover that their new belief is a belief they already have. They may discover that a principle they currently believe in is inconsistent with their offending behaviour – the reactive offender who is ‘standing up’ for his family, may be doing the very thing that distresses his family the most.

Review the “core thinking” the participant has identified in Step 2 and which they have recognized as lying behind a significant portion of their past history of violence and crime. With the focus on this core thinking, challenge the participant to find a new way of thinking that meets all the criteria of Step 3.

Keep in mind that maintaining self-respect, and feeling good, while thinking differently is almost certain to be a struggle. The person may need to adjust a whole system of thoughts, beliefs and attitudes to support their new thinking in any

given situation. This is the ultimate project of Cognitive Self Change.

New thoughts:

I don't need to let this guy make me mad.

He doesn't mean anything personal, he treats everyone this way.

If I feel disrespected by every little insult around here, I don't have a chance.

Let it go.

New rules:

I have the respect of the people that matter most to me, without using violence.

I'm not going to let him control my reactions.

Sometimes a man just has to let it go.

Example: In the sample Thinking Report presented above, the participant may have identified the following new thoughts, underlying rules and principles:

When the participant has a realistic and plausible set of new thoughts and attitudes to try out, and is in Stage Four go on to Step 4. When the participant has progressed to Stage 4 of

the program, never do Step 3 without doing Step 4, even if you have to continue into the next group session or work with the participant individually outside of group.

Step 4: Practice the interventions.

Participants are required to practice new thinking until they can use it—and get new behaviour as a result—in situations in which they are at real risk of violence or crime, while simultaneously feeling good about themselves. This is the skill requirement of Step 4. It is completely consistent with the program principle that:

We don't insist that you change, but we do insist that you learn how to change.

In practicing new ways of thinking it is important that participants be challenged to practice new behaviours along with their new thinking. This is a change of emphasis from early versions of Step 4. Earlier interpretations of Step 4 focused so exclusively on the new, intervention thinking that new behaviour appeared merely as a hoped-for by product. It is more practical to have participants identify their new thinking (Step 3), then identify overt behaviours that will naturally follow from this new thinking, then identify situations in which they can practice this new behaviour together with this new way of thinking.

New thinking and new overt behaviour are two sides of the one behaviour (the inside and the outside).

Objective: To learn how to use new thinking in real life situations.

Process:

- *The participant tries out his new interventions, first in group, then in real life.
- *Begin with a role-play or “walk through” of the new thinking.

In a role-play, set up a scene that replicates the situation in the Thinking Report or Check-In. Use other group members to play parts in the role-play. The person plays themselves.

Write down the new intervention thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes on the whiteboard. Place the whiteboard where the person can easily read it during the role-play.

Tell the group the role-play will enact the scene leading up to the ‘trigger event.’ Then the person will begin to react as he did before. But now they will catch themselves and force their thoughts in the direction of their interventions—the new thinking written on the flip chart.

The person will act-out their thinking (old and new) by speaking their thoughts out loud. They will indicate that they are

speaking their thoughts (not talking to another person) by pointing to their head while they speak (or some other mechanism that is clear to other participants).

Tell the person to make a conscious effort to think (and speak out loud) the new thoughts listed on the chart, to force themselves to try on (and speak) the new attitudes and beliefs that support these new thoughts.

Make it fun. Use props. Laugh. But make sure the participant eventually succeeds in using their new thinking.

Then review the role-play. Ask the group if the role-play seemed realistic. If it didn’t, make adjustments and do it over.

Ask the person if the new thinking seemed realistic to them. Did it seem effective? Did it seem possible? Could they pull it off and feel good about themselves? If not, make adjustments and do it over.

When the role-play is satisfactory, assign real-life practice.

A ‘walk-through’ of the person’s new thinking can be as effective as a full role-play. In a walk-through have the person imagine the situation and speak out loud their new thoughts

as if they were thinking these thoughts to themselves. Then take the role of devils advocate. Speak the person's old risk thoughts into their ear as they speak out loud their new intervention thoughts. Be persistent. Make it hard for them to speak their new thoughts with conviction. Make them struggle. When they have to struggle—but still succeed—they will have meaningful practice of their new way of thinking.

Assign real-life practice. The participant and facilitators plan together how the participant will practice their new thinking in anticipated real-life situations. Ask the participant to imagine situations that are likely to come up in the near future where they could practice their new thinking. These situations need not be exactly like the original situation, but they should be likely to trigger similar risky thinking in their mind.

If the participant regularly breaks a group rule, use that situation as a real-life example. Stop the group when the participant breaks the rule and get them to practice their new thinking – right now. Emphasise that the onus is on them to convince facilitators and other group members that they can make their new thinking work. If they can't do that consistently, then we are not convinced they can feel good about that new thinking.

In collaboration with the participant, agree on one or more situations or kinds of situations the participant will target for

practice. Agree on the new thinking the participant will practice using. Include new attitudes and beliefs. Have the participant write the new thinking down and keep it with them.

Walk through one such scenario. Agree on when and how the participant will report back to the group on how it went.

Example: In the sample thinking report group presented above the participant might anticipate being ordered to come out of his cell for inspection, because that happens every day. They could resolve to practice their new thinking, word for word, in their mind, the moment they hear this order.

Ask the participant to think of other times and situations when they can practice their new attitudes and beliefs, even without there being a trigger event that provokes their old risk thinking. These are opportunities for positive practice of new attitudes and new ways of thinking.

Examples: In the sample Thinking Report presented above, the participant might agree to practice their new thinking whenever they see the particular officer who told them to pick up the paper. Or they could practice their new rules whenever they think of family members who love and respect him. Or they could take a few minutes at the end of each day and review how they practiced their new rules during that day, and resolve to continue practicing the next day. Or they

could make a list of situations in their life where they can imagine it being the responsible thing to do to “just let it go.”

Remember: practice of new thinking means running the new thoughts through your mind and genuinely trying to capture the meaning of these thoughts. If new thinking doesn't ‘take’, either the participant is not trying hard enough or they have chosen new thinking that is beyond their grasp at this time. As a facilitator, you need to be able to tell which. Either way, there may be thoughts, beliefs or attitudes not yet identified that are interfering with making the new thinking work. You need to find out, and then target the thinking that is getting in the way.

Step 4 is not just getting new thoughts into your head. It is getting your head into new ways of thinking.

Chapter 4

COGNITIVE CHECK-IN

A Cognitive Check-in (Check-in) is a brief version of a Thinking Report. Whereas a Thinking Report covers past criminal behaviour, a Check-in covers recent behaviour, including here-and-now behaviour.

Additionally Check-ins can also be used when the participant contemplated breaking a rule, but didn't actually do so.



Cognitive Check-ins

Cognitive Check-ins provide participants with the chance to practice all the steps of Cognitive Self Change together, like they will eventually need to do on their own, in real life. They also allow every group member to practice the steps in every group meeting.

Cognitive Check-ins follow the same steps as the Thinking Report process. In general, Check-In Reports are briefer and less detailed than Thinking Reports presented in group. Also, Cognitive Check-ins usually focus on current or recent situations where the person was at some risk of hurtful behaviour without actually doing that behaviour. A good rule of thumb is “Since the last group”.

If the participant chooses to use a situation where they have committed an undetected crime, or breach of institutional rules, make sure they do not disclose details which would require facilitators to report this to authorities. Warn the participant not to give this information if you think they might.

Every member of every group will do a Cognitive Check-In at the beginning of each session. As members progress through Stages One to Three, the Check-In will add the second and third stage of Cognitive Self Change in Stages Two and Three respectively.

The steps of Cognitive Check-ins:

Introduction: Begin by having the person present an informal description of a situation when they were at some risk of acting criminally, hurtfully, or violently. This sets the stage for the Cognitive Check-in.

Step 1: Have the person describe the situation briefly and objectively, then go on and report their thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs. Check-Ins may be done purely orally, or scribed onto the whiteboard.

Step 2: Have the person explain what hurtful behaviour could have resulted from their thoughts and feelings, and explain how their particular thoughts and feelings were leading them in that direction. (In CSC jargon, “explain the risk in your thinking.”)

Step 3: Have the person identify alternative thinking they used—or could have used—to reduce the risk of acting hurtfully.

In Cognitive Check-ins we do generally not do Step 4: role-plays and assigned practice of the new thinking. However, the Check-In may form the basis for the role-play later in group.

Facilitators need to judge how much time to take with each Cognitive Check-in. The general guide is, Cognitive Check-ins take 3 to 7 minutes. Newer group members, or participants who are new to a particular Stage, will often take longer until they get the hang of the process/Step.

Using Cognitive Check-ins to practice the steps of CSC

Experienced group members will often be able to present all 3 steps of their report with little or no guidance from the facilitator. Even so, a certain amount of interaction with the presenter helps focus the process and keeps it from being superficial. Each step needs to be given close attention by the presenter, the facilitator, and the group. Facilitators should ask questions—or better, get group members to ask questions—that challenge the presenter to give a truly meaningful report.

As with Thinking Reports, Cognitive Check-ins follow the principle of progression. This means, do not let a participant present Step 2 of a Cognitive Check-in until and unless they have presented Step 1 adequately. Do not let them present Step 3 until they have adequately presented Steps 1 and 2.



CHECK-INS

- ❖ *Until a participant can use the skills of CSC on their thinking in-the-moment, they will be unable to change their behaviour.*
- ❖ *While Thinking Reports explore past situations, Check-ins focus on more recent situations, enabling participants to draw connections between their offending behaviour and beliefs they currently have.*
- ❖ *Additionally, Check-ins can focus on situations where the participant was at risk of breaking a rule, but didn't actually do so.*

Cognitive Check-In Reports, Step 1:

Objective: The participant states the situation and objectively reports their thoughts and feelings during the situation.

Process:

*Ask for an informal description of a risk situation, then ask the person for their thoughts, then their feelings, then their underlying rules and principles.

*Make sure the participant does not gloss over Step 1. The process of objective self-reporting is as critical in advanced levels of Stage Four, as it is in beginning levels of Stage One.

*Facilitators need to tune-in to the slightest sign the person is

- *a) re-living their thoughts and feelings, or
- *b) justifying their thoughts and feelings.

Every deviation from a strictly objective report needs to be captured as an opportunity to teach the practice of objectivity. This is as important for the group as it is for the presenter. With a little training and encouragement, group members can detect non-objectivity in Check-Ins and help set the process immediately back on track.

Watch for communication between group members and the presenter that is confrontive or adversarial. Take such examples as an opportunity to teach the practice of objectivity.

Also beware of group members who try to quietly ‘feed’ answers to a participant who is struggling with a step.

Watch for communication between group members and the presenter that is collusional (supportive of criminal thinking). Take these examples too as an opportunity to teach the practice of objectivity.

Facilitators should take notes during Check-Ins. It is helpful to do this on a whiteboard that can produce printouts (if available). These printouts allow an accurate record of the process of group and the participants’ progress. Getting another group member to scribe these notes frees up the facilitators to pay close attention to process, while also involving an extra group member who is forced to pay close attention to the Check-In.

Check-Ins often contain important clues to the participant’s personal logic of behaviour. These clues can be important to understanding the participant’s overall “criminal logic.” Don’t let them be lost. If not writing the Check-in on the whiteboard, one of the facilitators should take notes. Note taking should be as transparent as possible: Don’t try to write

down every word, and don't let your note-taking slow down or hamper the spontaneity of the report. One facilitator can write notes while the other guides the group process. Group members should understand why you are writing notes. It may put group members at ease if you offer to share your notes and explain them to any group member who is interested at the end of the group.

End Step 1 of a Cognitive Check-in by repeating back the participant's thinking exactly as they reported it. Don't paraphrase or change the language.

Cognitive Check-In Reports, Step 2

Objective: To direct the participant's attention to the way their thinking leads them to crime and violence.

Process:

Begin Step 2 by asking, "How did your thinking put you at risk of doing something violent or hurtful?" Ask for the kind of behaviour that could have (or did) come out of this way of thinking, and an explanation of how this thinking aimed toward that behaviour.

Presentation of risk in Cognitive Check-ins is more intuitive and less formal and structured than presentation of risk in Thinking Report groups. Check-Ins don't diagram how "key

pieces" of risk thinking connect together to produce a hurtful behaviour (Step 2B). In Cognitive Check-ins, we simply want the participant to become aware that their thinking is what produces their behaviour.

Establish a group norm that it is the presenter's task to get everyone in the group to recognize and understand the risk in their thinking. It is not the group's—or the facilitator's—responsibility to make the presenter see that risk. Rather than try to "drag out" the risk and make the participant see it, facilitators should take a sceptical posture: "I don't see the connection between your thinking and that behaviour. Can you make it more clear to me?"

Take care that each presenter is clear in their own mind that they are looking for risk in their thinking, not risk in the situation. And they are looking for signs that they are at risk of doing something hurtful, not risk of suffering injury from someone else. Facilitators need to tune-in to the slightest signs that the presenter is deviating from this strict concept of risk. Every deviation needs to be captured as an opportunity to teach the CSC concept of risk.

During Stage One and the early part of Stage Two, learning the process is more important than using the process to find important patterns of risk thinking. Facilitators need to judge

how and how far to challenge each individual in their presentation of Step 2.

Make sure a clear picture of the risk in the thinking has been drawn before you move on to Step 3. Again, a clear picture in a Cognitive Check-In will not be a complete and detailed picture. The main point is that the presenter—and the group—clearly recognize how a risk of hurtful behaviour came out of the presenter’s way of thinking.

Cognitive Check-In Reports, Step 3

Objective: The participant identifies new thinking that could lead away from hurtful/illegal behaviour, while allowing them to feel good about themselves

Process:

Begin Step 3 by asking, Is there thinking you could have used (or did use) to reduce that risk?

Step 3 of Cognitive Check-Ins is not as complex as Step 3 of Thinking Report groups. In Cognitive Check-Ins we encourage participants to imagine new ways of thinking. We don’t necessarily press to find the best possible new thinking.

Group members can suggest possible new thinking. Group members should be engaged, and in fact should actively facilitate the process. Staff must assure that the process stays focused and brief.

The In-the-moment Check-In

One special type of Check-in deserves special mention. An in-the-moment Check-In is one that is used spontaneously by staff when a participant is breaking a group rule, and the facilitator judges that the participant would benefit from examining the thinking behind this, before going on to use the Strategy of Choices.

The process behind this is identical to a standard Check-In, but it involves thinking and feelings that are still happening: “When I asked you to [follow that group rule], what did you think?” An important component of this is that we are objective when the thinking involves us. Hence, if they report that they think about us in unflattering terms, this is written on the board as objective information, and staff react exactly the same as if it was an historical report about someone else – this can be a real challenge for staff!

It will also be a challenge for the participant to be objective in this situation. Often in-the-moment-Check-Ins are done when the participant is angry. Consequently, an important part of this is to assist the participant to examine their think-

ing objectively, even – especially when – they are having those thoughts right now. However, if the participant is to succeed in changing his life, he will need to learn how to recognise, and change, his thinking in-the-moment. This can be a critical moment for some participants who have seen the process as meaningless and unrelated to them and their decisions – it is equivalent to doing a Thinking Report in the middle of an offence.

The in-the-moment check-in should be done to whatever stage the participant is at—including Step 4. This is a valuable learning exercise, can the participant use new thinking, here-and-now, when he is angry, to avoid breaking rules and feel good about himself when he does it?

At the end of the in-the-moment check-in, if the participant is still inclined to continue breaking the rule in question, facilitators should proceed to the Strategy of Choices. However, if it is clear he has decided to follow the rule, this is not necessary.

It is difficult for facilitators to do this task—it's often easy to recognise that it 'should' have been done, but difficult to recognise that it 'should be done now'. Nevertheless, this is a skill facilitators should develop.

Chapter 5

MAKING
THINKING
REPORTS AND
COGNITIVE
CHECK-INS
MEANINGFUL



Each participant's experience of Cognitive Self Change should be intensely and personally meaningful. Looking at their own thoughts and feelings will capture their interest—if they really do it. Discovering that they are personally responsible for their thoughts and feelings—and all the consequences of those thoughts and feelings—will wreck the comfortable illusion that other people and external circumstance are to blame for what they do. This is a dramatic—and intensely personal—revelation. Their discovery that they really can think differently—and therefore live differently—is an equally dramatic revelation. Finally, when the program is delivered well, each participant will confront an intensely personal choice: to use new attitudes and ways of thinking or continue with the criminality of their past (or present!).

It's the job of facilitators to focus and nurture these personal experiences. This means facilitators must communicate with group members as a personal encounter. This is essential to the process of delivering Cognitive Self Change. We must not let the technical process of the report overwhelm the personal meaning of the report. We need to be prepared to look past the details of any report, to the core thinking underlying it and to challenge the participant to see that core thinking with absolute clarity.

This is a considerable challenge. Even well trained facilitators can fail to make Cognitive Self Change a meaningful experience:

- * We permit participants to 'go through the motions' of an activity, without challenging them to make every part of that activity real and meaningful;
- * We feel rushed for time;
- * Or we feel we are struggling so hard to get their cooperation, that we welcome any kind of compliance;
- * Or we simply fail to pay attention. We forget how personal and meaningful CSC must be if it is going to truly influence our participant's lives. We forget that it is our job to make that happen.

Porporino (2003) reminds us of this when he warns us that it is not what we do *to* offenders that is important, rather it is what we do *with* them.

Thinking Reports and Cognitive Check-ins follow practically the same group process. But that process is just the technical part of facilitation. To make that process real and meaningful takes something more than technique.

Make a human connection. Facilitation of CSC is not an anonymous process. When we explain the steps, define the rules and expectations, or challenge a participant to perform, we

are engaging in an intimately personal communication. We present ourselves as a human being, interested in and respectful of the human being we are speaking to. This point is reinforced by Marshall (2006) who notes “...there is no evidence available to support the idea that procedures alone have powerful effects”.

Making a human connection means each of our participants recognize that we recognise them as a human being. This is also the basic meaning of respect.

Challenge participants to perform. Challenging a participant means that we are clear in our own mind what that participant needs to do and clear in communicating the need to do it. It does not mean being authoritarian or threatening. We do not challenge participants when we allow them to give superficial cognitive reports or to gloss over the risk in their thinking as if they were reading from a textbook, or offer new thinking that doesn't touch the emotional meaning of their criminal ways of thinking. We challenge them by caring enough to pay attention to the real experience of their criminal thinking and to demand that new thinking happens at that exact place.

Pay close attention. Cognitive Self Change takes active listening to a new level. Listen for the meaning behind their words. Listen for the thoughts and feelings, attitudes and beliefs that

are part of the participant's living experience, not just their words on a page. Try hard to understand that meaning and challenge them to make that meaning clear.

Practice scepticism. We don't start out with a full picture of our participants' thinking—or the risk in that thinking, or the how they will use new thinking—so we use our ignorance as leverage to get the person to make that picture clear.

Practice thinking and saying things like these:

- * “Let me see if I understand. You were thinking...what exactly?” (Step 1)
- * “I don't think I understand exactly what those words mean. Can you make it clear to me?” (Step 1)
- * “What did that thought sound like in your head at the time?” (Step 1)
- * “What did that thought feel like, exactly?” (Step 1)
- * “Help me see exactly what it looked like in your mind.” (Step 1)
- * “I'm not sure I see how that worked. Can you help me see just how thinking that way put you at risk? How did those thoughts work in your head?” (Step 2)
- * “I'm not sure I see how that new thought would help you reduce your risk. How does it work in your head?”(Step 3)

* “I don’t get how you can feel good about yourself while walking away from a fight. How does that thought achieve that?” (Step 3)

This kind of sceptical questioning has been called the “Columbo” process, after the TV detective. It’s a good image. By putting ourselves into a Columbo frame of mind, we can draw out the real meaning from the participant.

We are detectives. We need to develop a nose for the reality that goes on inside each group member’s head.

Be directive. Throughout the program, many of the Thinking Reports presented in group are selected in advance by the facilitators. We choose significant criminal behaviours that we expect to contain significant patterns of thinking. We insist that they report on all the major categories of crime they have committed. In Check-ins we allow a measure of flexibility on which situations are the subject of reports. (Learning to select meaningful situations is an important skill for participants to learn.) But this doesn’t mean participants can report on anything they might choose, simply because they might choose to report only on safe and insignificant situations. We need to direct participants toward areas of genuine risk. We need to use our authority to keep each participant focused on their own risky thinking.

Don’t let them practice doing it wrong (the 30 second rule). CSC focuses on four simple and basic cognitive skills. There is inevitably some inclination to digress from performing these skills and do any number of other things. Instead of reporting their thinking participants may want to justify their thinking or express (re-live) their feelings. Or they may complain about their circumstances in life. Or group members may offer advice and ‘problem solve’ another member’s situation, rather than help them practice the skills of CSC. Or they may want to do counselling of some sort.

The only way to learn the skills of CSC is to practice doing them correctly, and that means doing the skills and not doing something else. Sometimes it takes a few moments before we (or they) recognize that the process is off track. When it is off track, we should usually be able to recognize it and correct it within one half minute. We call this ‘the thirty second rule’.

Teach members to facilitate. The best CSC groups function with group members as facilitators and staff members as teachers. In these groups, staff facilitators’ main role is to teach group members how to facilitate well. Staff guide the process by guiding group members to guide the process.

Use of language

We need to adapt our language to the client group. Words that we use everyday may have different meanings to our client group, or may not be understood by them at all. Something as simple as ‘attitudes’ or ‘beliefs’ can be a struggle for our clients to understand or work with. CSC now mostly uses ‘rules’, ‘underlying rules’ or ‘principles’ to capture these concepts. Facilitators will need to pay attention to their participants and discover which words work best for them.

Similarly, their language may not always make sense to us. One client in a bar dispute said that he thought “I’ll take him outside for a little chat”. While the rest of the group seemed to understand, it took the facilitators a little while to realise that “a little chat” involved fists rather than words. Additionally, clients will use jargon that you will need to learn to work with them. The Columbo technique mentioned earlier works well here: “I’m not sure what you mean by _____. Can you explain that to me?”

Preparation Phase

Prior to commencing the group phase of the program, participants will meet individually with one of the facilitators to prepare for the program. During the preparation phase the following topics will be covered:

- * Limited confidentiality
- * Structure of the program including the four steps of Cognitive Self Change
- * Introduction to Thinking Reports
- * Introduction to Cognitive Check-Ins
- * Introduction to Program rules
- * Completion of consent forms
- * Completion of any pre-post testing

This phase may take a number of sessions depending upon the individual participant. Usually, one session should suffice.

Limited Confidentiality

We cannot offer confidentiality; to do so would be misleading and untruthful. It is extremely important to explain to participants that everything that is said and done in a group or as part of an assignment may be shared with other staff. This will include the facilitators, Treatment Manager, Supervising Probation Officer and any other individuals who are involved

in the offender's progress through their sentence. In Vermont they go as far as to promise there will be 'no-confidentiality'. This lack of confidentiality is balanced by assurances that information shared in the program will not be used unfairly against them to punish or restrict them.

The key points that must be covered in the interview are:

- * Confidentiality is limited.
- * Information will be shared with those members of staff directly involved in the offender's progression through his sentence. There will be no gossiping or unnecessary disclosure of information.
- * Group members will not be required to report incriminating (identifying) details of past offences and criminal behaviour for which they have not been convicted.
- * Group members are required to accept responsibility for crimes for which they have received a conviction (unless on appeal).
- * Group members will be required to report their thinking. It is especially important that they report thinking that might pose a risk of leading to violence or criminal behaviour. They will be required to report their thinking during past and current situations, including situations in which they have committed crimes or acts of violence in the past, and in which their thinking puts them at a potential risk of committing a new crime or violent act.

* Disclosure of thinking that puts a group member at risk of criminal behaviour will not automatically be interpreted as a sign that the offender is at risk to re-offend. On the contrary, reporting 'high-risk thinking' in the program is more an indication that the person is making a responsible effort to control his risk of re-offending. The exception will be when a group member's thinking indicates that the client poses a serious risk of danger to an identifiable victim, in which case staff may act to protect potential victims. Also if the group member's behaviour suggests a direct risk to prison security then staff will report this to the establishment.

* Group members will not be required to report criminal acts or rule violations performed by others, including members of their program group.

Facilitators should consider how much of this information should be provided in written form for the offender to take away and consider in his own time. At the end of the first preparation session, the offender should be given a copy of the consent form and asked to decide whether he is willing to undertake the program. It may be appropriate to give the consent form and allow the offender time to read it and return it at a later date when he has had time to consider this and, where appropriate, to discuss this with his family/partner etc. A specific time should be agreed when the facilitator will return to answer any final questions and to collect the consent form.

Structure of the Program

Facilitators should briefly outline how the program works in language the participant can understand. See description of the program, in Sections 2 & 3, for information on the program structure.

Introduction to Thinking Reports

Facilitators should give a brief introduction to Thinking Reports. It is not expected that the participant will understand this at this stage, just that the concept is briefly overviewed now so it is not totally alien when he sees it, in group. Thinking Reports are described in Chapter 3.

Introduction to Cognitive Check-Ins

Cognitive Check-ins provide participants with the chance to practice all the steps of Cognitive Self Change together, like they will eventually need to do on their own, in real life. They also allow every group member to practice the steps in every group meeting.

Cognitive Check-ins follow the same steps as the Thinking Report process. In general, Check-In Reports are briefer and less detailed than Thinking Reports presented in group. Cognitive Check-ins usually focus on current or recent situations where the person was at some risk of hurtful behaviour without necessarily doing that behaviour.

Every participant will do a Cognitive Check-In at the beginning of each session. As members progress through Steps One to Three, the Check-In will add the second and third stage of Cognitive Self Change in Steps Two and Three respectively.

Cognitive Check-Ins are described in detail in Chapter 4.

Introduction to Program Rules

Facilitators should ensure that the offender understands the program rules. These are explained in detail in Section 8, but the main points are:

- * Keep an open channel of communication
- * Be respectful (all the time, no matter what)
- * Complete assignments, attend all groups and be punctual
- * Participate constructively in groups

The rules should be explained using the strategy of choices (Section 9) where the rules are outlined, the participant is challenged to commit to the rules (all of them) or not to participate. He can't just follow some of the rules some of the time.

Commitment to Program

It is essential that the offender makes a commitment to abide by the rules of the program. Facilitators should be wary of falling into the trap of assuming that participants need ‘genuine’ internal motivation to change: “The essence ... is that treatment can bring about change in people who are apparently unmotivated to receive treatment voluntarily and those who are ambivalent about change” (McMurrin, 2002). Cognitive Self Change is one of the few programs designed specifically for the unmotivated, so it is oxymoronic to require motivation as a condition of entry.

At this point the issue is not whether he wants to change, but rather whether he is prepared to participate fully in this program. This commitment will be used later as a tool for challenging the offender to become aware of his own agency in events, rather than blaming others for all his decisions. Facilitators should remember a core tenet of this program, which says that we do not require offenders to change, but rather to show that they have the skills with which to make the choice for themselves.

Consent Forms

Once the participant understands the outline of the program, covered above, the facilitator should explain the consent forms and get the participant to sign. As explained earlier in this section, the participant should be given the oppor-

tunity to take the form away before signing it, if they have any concerns about this.

Individual programs should design their own consent forms to meet their local needs and circumstances, but should ensure that the consent form does not breach this principles outlined in this manual.

Fearless Criminal Inventory

Do not commence this exercise until the consent form is signed, as it is essential the participant understands the limits to confidentiality and has consented to that. Depending upon local needs, this exercise can be done individually prior to entering group, as the first assignment upon entering group, or by-passed. If using the former method, facilitators should be alert for participants who drag this task out to avoid entering group. In that case, the Strategy of Choices should be used.

During the program, participants will be required to complete thinking reports on a range of violent and criminal offences, including behaviours that were not subject to any official sanction. It is important to gather a complete as possible history of the participant’s use of violence and crime so that the journal assignments given in group can target the full range of violent and criminal behaviour that the participant has used.

Review 5.1 Making Thinking Reports and Cognitive Check-Ins Meaningful

Select all the correct answers below

- A.** Participants should choose all of their Thinking Reports and Check-Ins
- B.** Don't let participants facilitate
- C.** CSC is a process of assisting offenders to understand and change their own thinking
- D.** Participants need to be motivated to start CSC

Check Answer

Chapter 6

THE STAGES OF CSC

CSC involves Four Stages, which map the four skills of CSC plus post-program maintenance:

Stage One: Learn to pay attention to your thoughts and feelings, underlying rules and principles.

Stage Two: Learn to recognize how your thoughts and feelings, underlying rules and principles lead you to do crime or violence.

Stage Three: Find new ways of thinking that don't lead you to do crime or violence—and that also provide you with a sense of self-worth.

Stage Four: Practice using your new thinking until you can use it when it counts, in real-life situations.

Stage Five: Maintenance.



Stage One: Objectively Reporting Your Thinking

Structure of Groups

Every group session has the same structure and consists of participants at all four stages. Each group begins with all members doing a cognitive check-in. Participants, who are in Stage One, present their Check-in only as far as Step 1 of Cognitive Self Change. The process for facilitating a Check-in is in Chapter 4.

After the Check-ins, which should take about 30-40 minutes, one to four members of the group will make presentations to the group. Group members who are in Stage One will present Thinking reports, as outlined below.

Journal assignments 1.1 – 1.3: Thinking Reports on at least three offences/harmful behaviours from their Fearless Criminal Inventory. At least one of these should be the index offence and the Thinking Reports should sample all the major forms of harmful behaviour from the FCI including domestic

abuse, substance abuse, and sexually abusive behaviour (not victimisation).

The initial presentation that participants make in Stage One will commence with a draft Thinking Report that they prepared before group. The facilitators will then work through this, with the participant and the rest of the group, to produce a full Thinking Report. The process for doing this is described in Chapter 3.

Alternatively, the entire Thinking Report may be created during group. While this takes longer, it may be preferable with highly resistant populations, particularly community-based offenders. For the initial presentation, facilitators should work with the participant to select a situation that the participant is likely to be able to be objective about. This will often be an offence that was committed a long time ago, or one that the participant does not have strong feelings about.

By the time a participant is ready to progress to Stage Two of CSC they will be able to present a full Thinking Report without any significant prompting. Until they reach that standard they should be coached to improve their understanding and skill, but it should be made clear to the participant that an un-coached Thinking Report is required for graduation to Stage Two.

The criteria for graduation to Stage 2 are:

1. Completion of Thinking Reports as described above;
2. The demonstrated ability to be objective across all major offence categories;
3. Satisfactory completion of at least four Check-Ins; and
4. The participant should no longer require coaching to present a Check-In or Thinking Report.

Stage Two: Explaining How Your Thinking Leads to Offending

Stage Two members will complete Check-Ins to Step 2 and present the following journal assignments:

Journal assignment 2.1-3: Update the Thinking Reports done in Stage One to include Step 2 and present in group;

Journal assignment 2.4: At least one other Thinking Report on an incident not previously covered, including Steps 1 and 2.

The initial presentation that participants make in Stage Two will often require the participant to be coached through the process of identifying the risky thinking and key thinking, however they should have prepared by identifying this thinking themselves before group. As with all skills in this program, the participant will have witnessed more advanced participants demonstrating this skill on multiple occasions before he is required to attempt it.

The process for doing this is described in Section 11. By the time a participant is ready to progress, to Stage Three, they will have a clear understanding of the links between their thinking and their behaviour and should be able to clearly explain these links to the group without coaching. Until they reach that standard they should be coached until they do. Hence, some group members will require more than the minimum number of Thinking Reports to achieve this standard. This should not be seen as punitive, just as the work needed to achieve this competency. Facilitators (and other group members) should join in a partnership with the key participant to achieve this standard.

A key point to remember at this stage is that the key participant is responsible for ensuring that facilitators and other participants understand their thinking – it is their job to convince us and the group, how their thinking led to the offence, not the reverse.

The criteria for graduation to Stage 3 are:

1. Completion of Thinking Reports as described above;
2. The demonstrated ability to identify risky thinking and explain how that thinking can lead to violence and crime;
3. Satisfactory completion of at least 4 check-ins including step 2; and
4. The participant should no longer require coaching to identify risky thinking.

Stage Three: Developing New Thinking

Stage Three members will complete Check-Ins to Step 3 and present the following journal assignments:

Journal assignments 3.1-4: Update all previous TR's to include Step 3 and present during group.

More antisocial group members, whose violence and criminal lifestyle is very entrenched, are likely to experience difficulty with finding new thinking that avoids crime and violence, but still allows them to feel good about themselves. In contrast, participants who struggled in Stage One, due to shame issues, may find this a relatively easy step. Hence, facilitators should be ready for some participants to suddenly struggle at this step, while others who have previously struggled may find this task quite simple.

The process for doing this is described in Section 11. By the time a participant is ready to progress to Stage Four, they will

be readily able to develop new thinking which reduces the risk of violence and crime, while simultaneously allowing them to feel good about themselves. They should be able to clearly explain why this new thinking reduces the risk of violence and crime and how they are able to feel good about themselves while using it. They should be coached until they are able to do this. Hence some group members will require more than the minimum number of Thinking Reports to achieve this standard. This should not be seen as punitive, just as the work needed to achieve this competency. Facilitators (and other group members) should join in a partnership with the key participant to achieve this standard.

Journal assignment 3.5: At least one other TR on an incident not previously covered, up to Step 3.

Journal assignment 3.6: Write a description of the themes and patterns of thinking that have led you to do violent and criminal behaviours in the past. (No Labels.) Describe what you

are doing when you think that way. Draw a thematic ‘cycles and sequences’ diagram based on these themes and patterns of thinking. Describe how this thinking leads you to criminal or violent behaviour. Identify the core thinking or core principles behind your history of criminal behaviour. This assignment must be presented in group. This exercise is described in more detail below.

The criteria for graduation to Stage Four are:

1. Completion of Thinking Reports as described above;
2. The demonstrated ability to identify alternative thinking, which allows them to feel good about themselves and explain how that thinking will help them to avoid violence and crime;
3. Satisfactory completion and presentation of the themes and patterns assignment; and
4. Satisfactory completion of at least 4 check-ins including step 3.

Themes and Patterns

When a participant has completed a number of circle diagrams for separate situations, it is possible to create a circle that represents the general pattern of thinking that drives the behaviour. There may be several patterns that interact in different situations, but for most participants, it should be possi-

ble to represent the vast majority of their offending with one circle. Before facilitators give up on finding a single pattern and start looking for multiple patterns, they should remind themselves that Cognitive Self Change can only be as effective as the participant’s ability to remember and use the new thinking they develop. If a complex model is developed, it is less likely that the participant will be able to use new thinking, when he has to choose from a complex menu of choices. Hence, ‘as simple as possible’ is the rule that should be applied.

This exercise, while conceptually fitting in Stage Two, has been moved to the end of Stage Three because it is quite difficult for many participants, as it requires conceptual skills that the participants may not often use. Hence, facilitators may need to coach and prompt, quite substantially, to get a participant started on this exercise. However, if they do so, they need to be very sure that the participant ‘owns’ the circle that is created.

In starting a pattern circle session facilitators should review the following with the group:

* Our aim in looking at circles of thinking is to be able to identify the ways in which our thinking drives our behaviour towards violent or hurtful acts.

* When we have looked at situation circles, this has helped us to develop an understanding of how each situation developed.

* Refer the group back to the third stage of cognitive self-change (Use new thinking to avoid that hurtful behaviour). Our aim now is to find the ways in which our thinking generally leads us towards risky behaviour so that we can develop alternative ways of thinking that stop the behaviour in its tracks. Sometimes the same thinking sounds different in our heads but it means the same thing. Therefore in developing a pattern circle we will be summarising the ways in which the thinking sounds, so that we can recognise the triggers to hurtful behaviour, whatever they may sound like in different situations.

In looking at a pattern circle, facilitators should collate all the situation circles and display them clearly on flipcharts around the group room, or hand out copies so everyone can participate in the exercise. This may involve the offender agreeing to write up some of the journal work to share openly with the group.

The process of pattern circles

The process of pattern circles is as follows:

1. Draw the group's attention to the circles and ask the key offender to read through each one so that the group are reminded of how each circle worked.
2. On a piece of flipchart paper, or whiteboard, write the start of the pattern circle. This should be written as a general statement that summarises the types of situations in which the offender has engaged in hurtful behaviour. This should be agreed with the offender. For example, "when someone stops me doing what I want to do".
3. Review the situation circles and ask the offender to draw out the key pieces that represent the type of thinking he or she engaged in. For example, the feeling of anger might be present in all the situations, or a number of thoughts might be represented by the summary thought "this person can't stop me". Write these key pieces on a separate piece of flipchart paper. This process resembles foundation step two, except this time the offender is looking across a number of situations.
4. Follow the process of creating a situation circle to place all these key pieces into the pattern circle. The representa-

tion of each thought and feeling may use the words from a particular situation circle and facilitators should check with the offender that this form of words does represent the underlying trigger.

5. Add in the underlying rules/principles that form the centre of the pattern circle. It should be possible at this point for the offender to see that a limited range of rules and principles can be reflected in many different ways. The next step helps them to identify pro-social ways of expressing their underlying principles so that their core needs are met.

Guidelines for Pattern Circles

Facilitators should bear in mind the following general guidelines when completing pattern circles:

* They must ensure that the rest of the group are fully engaged in the process. Questions used at each stage of the thinking report process can be used here as well as regular summaries of the work. This is important because, when an advanced group member is presenting his pattern circle work, new group members have only just started draft thinking reports. Facilitators must plan how to engage everyone and ensure that they understand the general process. Using advanced group members to explain the process can help here as this also helps to check the advanced person's understanding.

* They must be especially careful not to create patterns where these are not evident. It is very easy for facilitators to think they can clearly see the pattern, when in fact the offender needs to continue to work on situation circles to develop the picture. As with all steps in CSC it is critical that the key participant 'owns' his work. This is a key difference between CSC and more psychoeducational programs, which attempt to teach a concept and hope the participant will internalise it. In CSC, the participant has to discover the links and then convince others that these links are real.

* A number of different pattern circles might be necessary to cover the participant's thinking. It may be helpful for the participant to follow a group session with an individual session working through another pattern before asking him or her to complete further patterns as part of the journal assignment. This is a complex process and facilitators should be particularly careful to ensure they support the participant in completing the work. Participants may become de-motivated if they feel they cannot understand a pattern sufficiently well to complete the circle.

* Before assuming that more than one pattern circle is needed, facilitators should ask themselves whether the participant has conceptualised the issues enough. For example, one participant had conceptualised the trigger as "When people don't listen" which didn't explain a burglary. However, broadening the description of the trigger to "When people are stupid" (which actually meant "When I think people are stupid") he was able to incorporate all his situation circles into

one pattern circle. It may be necessary for the participant to return to more situation circles to find the pattern. Facilitators should be aware of their own personal biases, which could cloud their judgement, e.g. the belief that domestic violence is fuelled by patriarchal beliefs and must represent a separate pattern circle to other violence or crimes.

* The method described above is one way to complete this task. Facilitators should work to find the method that works best with their client group. It may be useful to do some 1:1 work with the participant to prepare them for this exercise. The important thing is that a circle is produced which accurately represents the pattern of offending for a particular participant – both in his eyes and the rest of the group.

Stage Four: Practicing Your New Thinking

Stage Four members will complete Check-Ins to Step 3 and present the following journal assignments:

Journal assignment 4.1: Review your themes and patterns from Stage 3. For each kind of risk thought, describe a new kind of thought that would reduce the risk. Do the same for each risk rule or principle. For the core thinking or core principles identified in your Themes and Patterns journal assignment, identify new core thinking and core principles. This could be done graphically, but it is often easier to simply list the old thinking and rules on one side of the board, with the corresponding new thinking and rules on the other side.

There does not always need to be a 1:1 correspondence between new thinking and old thinking. Sometimes one new thought will replace several old thoughts. Sometimes the new thinking will need several parts – such as one part to direct the new behaviour, and another part to help the person feel good about that choice.

Journal assignment 4.2: Identify opportunities to practice the new thinking you have identified in check-ins, Thinking Reports, and journal assignments. These should include situations that typically trigger risk thinking in your mind. They should also include neutral or positive situations where you can practice your new thinking and new attitudes without being at explicit risk of criminal or violent behaviour. Keep a practice log of each time you use new thinking, listing:

- * The situation;
- * The risky thinking triggered by that situation (if any);
- * The exact new thinking you chose to use;
- * An evaluation of the degree of conviction with which you used this new thinking (how much did you mean it; how much did you believe it);
- * Describe the effect of your new thinking on your behaviour; and
- * How you felt about yourself after the situation.

Participants **MUST** role-play some of these situations during group prior to practicing them in real life. See below for guidelines on the use of role-play.

Journal assignment 4.3: Put together your Self-Risk-Management Plan, to include:

- * The thinking from your Themes and Patterns assignment;
- * Risk situations, and what you have done in these kinds of situations in the past;
- * New thinking, and how you will practice it:
 - In high-risk situations;
 - In normal (not high-risk) situations.

Present your approved Self-Risk-Management Plan to the group.

In some settings formally completing this assignment may not be required. If not using this exercise, facilitators should still be confident that the participant has well-rehearsed thinking they can use to make lawful choices in high-risk situations while feeling good about themselves.

The criteria for graduation are:

1. Completion of Journal Assignments 4.1-3 as described above;
2. The demonstrated ability to use alternative, non-risky, thinking which allows them to feel good about themselves;
3. Satisfactory completion of at least 4 check-ins including step 3;

Role-play

Role-play is traditionally an area in correctional programs that both participants and facilitators try to avoid. However, role-play is acknowledged as an important component of correctional treatment (Andrews, 2001) and is an essential component of CSC. Hence, facilitators should not shirk away from requiring role-plays. This can be easily explained to participants that we require them to be able to carry out the new thinking and we need to see for ourselves that they can do it. Facilitators could further explain that the role-play allows the participant the option of making mistakes without any negative consequences, whereas mistakes in the real world can be costly.

At the risk of labouring this point, if you are graduating participants without them doing role-plays, you are not doing CSC.

Stages of Role-plays

Discuss and set up scenario

Before a role-play begins, facilitators should discuss the scenario with the key participant and the group. It is important to make sure that the scenario is not too difficult, as the goal is to give the participant an experience of success, not to show him how deficient he is at the new thinking. Once a participant has successfully conquered a particular task, the facilitators can plan a slightly more difficult scenario. The scenarios used in role-plays should be the ones from the practice log, Check-ins, or similar situations that can generalise to those practice situations. It is highly desirable for a participant to practice a specific situation in role-play prior to tackling it in real life.

One facilitator should be ‘Director’ and able to call time-outs and reverse time, so that the role-play can be discussed and reversed to allow further practice in the same situation. The Director should be active and confident, rather like the director of a play. Rather than asking “Are you ready to start now?” (which may invite conversations about “Why do I have to do this”), the Director should establish that everything is in place and then direct the players to begin the role-play, this will often involve the protagonist rather than the key participant. Directors should be wary of being over cautious and taking too long to set the role-play up, as this may generate extra anxiety and avoidance behaviour in the participants. It

is better to take a no fuss attitude, such as that taken doing a thinking report or check-in with an advanced participant.

Hot seat at time of scenario

Once the scenario has been outlined, a decision should be made about whether the key participant will play themselves or not. It is expected that the key participant will mostly play the part of themselves, but when they are struggling with a task, one of the other participants, or a facilitator, can play their part to assist the participant to see how it can be done.

Other participants can play various roles including the protagonist, an angel on the shoulder reminding the participant of the new thinking and, for participants who are doing well with the role-play exercise, a devil on the other shoulder who can urge the participant to carry out the old thinking. Other participants can be given roles of observing for certain things, such as a particular type of new thinking that the participant is trying to practice.

Chart up old thinking

It can be helpful to have the old thinking displayed clearly on the wall to assist the key participant, and the observers, to be clear about the type of thinking used in his offences.

Review intervention thinking

The new thinking, that the key participant will be practicing, should also be reviewed. If the key participant is at an early stage of this task, it may be useful to have the new thinking up on the wall to refer to during the role-play, and to have a coach at their shoulder to assist him to use this new thinking. As he becomes more skilled at using the new thinking, these aids could be removed. Someone who is ready to graduate should be able to pass a role-play without being reminded of their new thinking.

Practice and coach intervention thinking and behavioural strategies

The heart of the role-play will often be quite stop-start in nature as the participant practices a piece of new thinking, receives some feedback or asks questions and then practices again. If the participant is finding the task very difficult, it might be useful to restrict the role-play to short one-sentence 'grabs' to give the key participant an experience of doing the new thinking. In contrast, when the key participant is very competent at the task, the Director could turn up the heat a bit to let them show what they are capable of, but not so much that they cannot successfully do the task. Facilitators should ensure that the practice ends with a successful rendition by the participant, so they can feel good about being able to do the new thinking.

The role-play should involve some action. Always get the actors to move away from their chairs and play their roles standing up, unless it is important for the story that they are seated. There should be no physical contact during the role-play, unless the Director is certain they can manage this without the risk of violence (e.g. a handshake). The type of physical behaviours in the role-plays should be discussed before the role-play and any violent actions during the role-play (such as an assault by the protagonist) should be simulated and the method of simulation discussed beforehand: "George when your character hits Bill, simulate that by punching your own hand, but not close to him". This is important as a number of violent offenders have a strong sense of their personal space.

Chart up any new intervention thinking

If the key participant comes up with new intervention thinking during the role-play (whether as a result of considered analysis or a spontaneous reaction), and if the new thinking looks effective, chart it up on the whiteboard so the key participant does not lose this new intervention.

Debrief

At the end of the role-play, ensure that you debrief all the group. A useful method for doing this is to firstly ask the key participant what they did well, followed by any other players in the role-play, the rest of the group and then the facilita-

tors. The key participant could then be asked what they could have done better, followed by the others as listed above, then allowing for some final comments by the key participant.

Final Role-Play

When a participant is ready to graduate, they should be able to successfully complete a role-play on any situation the facilitators believe they might reasonably encounter in their life. This role-play should be able to be completed without any assistance (and often with added difficulties, such as a difficult protagonist and a ‘devil on their shoulder’ whispering risky thoughts into their ear). This final role-play should involve as little preparation as is feasible. It might be useful to ask the participant to leave the room so other participants can be briefed on their role without giving the key participant time to prepare for that situation – because that’s what happens in real life!

Graduation

When a participant has completed all the requirements of Step Four, he will graduate from the group. Facilitators should make a big fuss about this, as it represents a significant achievement by the participant. In some cases, this will be the first thing the participant has ever completed. If it is permissible within the centre they are working, facilitators

should organise for a cake or other symbol of this achievement. It is worth noting that not celebrating this achievement sends a strong signal that we do not think that graduating from the program (and consequentially the program itself) is of any significance. Facilitators who have the attitude “He shouldn’t get cake because he did the crime” should do a thinking report and look for the risks (to the community) in their thinking.

NEW THINKING PRACTICE LOG	
1) Situation:	Task: Prior to a situation that has been risky in the past, prepare yourself by coming up with new ways of thinking you can use for interventions. Complete steps 1, 2, and 3 prior to the situation and steps 4, 5, and 6 after. Use this tool to help practice the intervention process.
2) Risk Thinking:	
3) New way of thinking (especially new beliefs, attitudes, principles):	
4) How much I believed in my new thinking: (Scale 1- 10, 1 not good, 10 excellent) and explanation	
5) Effect on my behaviour:	
6) How I felt about myself after the situation:	

Self Risk Management Plan

THINKING	SITUATIONS	BEHAVIOURS
Old Thinking	Risk Situations	Old Behaviours
New Thinking (for high risk situations and practice situations)	Practice Situations (where you can practice new thinking, without having to be in a risky situation)	New Behaviours

Chapter 7

STAGE FIVE: POST-GROUP MAINTENANCE

The skills of CSC, like any other skill, need to be practiced regularly if they are to be effective.

Consequently, participants should have access to a forum where they can practice their new thinking. This could be done individually, or in a group setting.



Maintenance

Traditionally, when a participant finishes a program, they are on their own. Whether they are in custody or the community, they will generally have no contact with program staff after they graduate. This is far from an ideal situation. If we are serious about reducing the risk of reoffending, then investing in post-group maintenance is worthwhile. This can take the form of three broad strategies: Maintenance groups; one-to-one reinforcement; and post-mandate availability.

Maintenance Groups

The structure of maintenance groups can vary, as can the frequency, but we offer the following guidelines. Maintenance groups should be less frequent than CSC groups – around monthly seems sensible. The main content of maintenance groups should be Check-ins. These should be more detailed than Check-ins done in CSC groups. The Check-ins should be developed to Step 3, unless the thinking used in the Check-in already clearly meets that standard.

Where a participant's Check-in suggests they are struggling to use their new thinking, or that new thinking is less than effective, a role-play should be developed from that situation. This will assist the participant to practice and/or refine their new thinking.

As all members of a maintenance group have attained the four skills of CSC, the group can be more free-flowing. There is potential to have discussion around a range of issues relevant to the participants. Generally this should be something that is initiated by the participants, rather than being dictated by facilitators. For example, a participant may mention that he finds it hard to fit in with his work colleagues, because his background (chronic offending) is so different to his colleagues. Group members could share their input about how he could fit in better or cope with these differences. The aim should be to uncover new thinking or rules that could help with this.

If a CSC graduate is still under some form of correctional supervision, they could be mandated (directed) to attend maintenance group. While many correctional managers will resist the idea, we strongly believe that ex-offenders who are no longer under any form of correctional supervision should be welcomed into maintenance groups, if they wish to attend. Voluntary participants should be free to turn up whenever they need, not required to commit to a particular number of sessions.

Chapter 8

APPENDIX A: START-UP LESSONS FOR A CSC GROUP

These lessons are intended for use when starting a group for the very first time. They are an aid to getting CSC going and should only be followed until some participants are capable of giving a coached Check-In and Thinking Report. At that point, the normal CSC process should be followed.





Lesson One

Introduction

The following Lesson Plans give directions for beginning a CSC group in a new location. After the group is up and running, enrolment in that group is open-ended, meaning that members will leave the group when they finish their own schedule of tasks and presentations, and new members will join the group whenever there is an opening.

If you are already running a group in a particular location, and wish to start a second, simply divide the group into two and continue by adding new participants to those groups in the normal manner, rather than using these lessons.

The time taken to complete each of these lessons will vary from place to place depending upon the mix of participants and characteristics of the facilitators. Hence, these lessons may not map directly onto a session. Facilitators can present more than one lesson in a session if they see fit at the time.

Facilitators should remember, that the purpose of the start up lessons, is to allow the rolling format to start. Once it is possible to get group members started on the process of Check-ins and Thinking Reports, facilitators should commence the normal rolling structure, even if these start up lessons are not complete. That is, the start up lessons are just a tool to enable the rolling group to start.

As a normal CSC group will have up to 6-8 participants, it is best to commence a start-up group with two or three participants. After about four sessions add a new participant. Keep doing this until the group is full, then add new participants whenever someone graduates.

Lesson One

Activities:

- * Introduce yourself and introduce members to each other.

-
- * Explain the basic concepts of Cognitive Self Change.
 - * Present and explain the 4 Steps of Cognitive Self Change
 - * Present a situation and facilitate a Thinking Report.
 - * Describe the 4 Steps of Cognitive Self Change, based this Thinking Report.

Objectives:

Group members will begin to understand the Steps of Cognitive Self Change, the rationale of the Steps, and the 4 parts of a Thinking Report.

Group members will begin to be engaged by the process. They will find it interesting.

The Lesson:

Introduce yourself to the group and the group members to each other.

Present the basic ideas of Cognitive Self Change:

- * What we do inside our heads controls how we act and how we live our lives.
- * Cognitive Self Change teaches us how to take control of our lives by controlling what we do inside our minds.

* Cognitive Self Change teaches us to take direct control of our:

- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Underlying Rules/Principles (Attitudes and Beliefs)

Write these words on a flip chart, whiteboard or overhead projector.

Use your own words to explain these ideas. Check as you go to be sure you have every group member's attention and that you are being understood.

Prepare your explanation of these ideas before you come to group. Keep in mind how well (or not so well) your group members understood these ideas in their individual pre-group interview.

Remember, this is review of material they have already heard in the pre-group interview. Now you are presenting these ideas to initiate the group process.

Explain, using your own words: Cognitive Self Change involves 4 simple steps:

- 1) Pay attention to what's happening in your mind:
 - * Thoughts
 - * Feelings
 - * Underlying Rules & Principles
- 2) Notice when your thoughts feelings, underlying rules or principles are leading you towards doing something hurtful
- 3) Find new thinking that will lead you someplace else
- 4) Practice using this new thinking

Present an example. It is preferable to use an example from your own life, as long as it doesn't present the facilitator in a bad light and is not too personal. The other facilitator should facilitate this thinking report in the normal manner, while explaining to participants what they are doing. Alternatively, you could present a hypothetical example such as below:

“Here's an example. Imagine a boy sitting in a classroom. We'll call him Jason. Imagine that this boy doesn't like school at all. He has lots of problems at home. He doesn't do well in school and he doesn't like the teacher. And the teacher doesn't like him. Today is a particularly bad day. His father

yelled at him. The teacher calls on Jason to give an answer in class. Jason doesn't know the answer, and he feels embarrassed.

NOTE: for older offenders, create an alternative scenario more relevant to the group's experience.

“The teacher raises his voice and, in front of the whole class, he accuses Jason of being lazy.

Write at the top of a flip chart/whiteboard:

Situation: The teacher calls Jason lazy

“What do you think is going on inside of Jason's mind?”

Create a 'brainstorm' of suggestions. Write each suggestion down on the board. Start with particular thoughts Jason might be having. Remember: Jason's thinking does not have to be consistent. (In fact, it probably won't be.) Write down every suggestion on the board. (Leave room for the parts of a thinking report to follow: feelings, and underlying rules/principles. You should try to get Jason's whole thinking report on one sheet.)

“Now, what feelings do you think Jason is having?”

Do the same as above, only concentrate on feelings. You may suggest some feelings yourself, but ask the class to confirm them. Include embarrassment, disrespect, etc., in addition to anger.

“Very good. Now let’s try to look a little deeper into Jason’s mind. Do you think Jason might have any general attitudes about teachers or about situations where he is embarrassed or belittled or about people in authority? Let’s use our imagination and try to guess what Jason’s underlying principles might be”.

Some useful questions at this point can be:

- * What does he think about his teacher?
- * What does he think about teachers generally?
- * What does he think about authority figures generally?

Explain that underlying rules and principles are similar: they are the kind of general thinking that fits a lot of different situations. They refer to the ‘thinking behind our thinking’. Sometimes we have to take time to dig beneath the surface of our thoughts and feelings in order to uncover our underlying rules and principles. Explain that we will learn how to do that in Cognitive Self Change.

“Good. What we’ve done is an example of the first step of Cognitive Self Change. We have examined the content of Jason’s thinking”.

Refer to the list of the steps of Cognitive Self Change.

“We’ve written down the situation, then we wrote down Jason’s thoughts, his feelings, and his underlying rules and principles.

“We call this a: Thinking Report”

“Thinking Reports are one of the basic tools of Cognitive Self Change. We will practice doing a lot of Thinking Reports.”

“When you have demonstrated you can do Thinking Reports properly, you will go to Step Two of the program, where your task will be to uncover the risky thinking in your Thinking Reports. After that you will develop new thinking during Step Three which allows you to avoid that risk, while still feeling good about yourself. Then you will move to Step Four where you will practice using this new thinking until you can do it. After that you will graduate from this group and go on to the maintenance program.”

At this point it is worth re-emphasising that participants will only progress through the program by doing the work, hence they are liable to progress at different speeds. Remind them that simply attending will not enable them to complete the program. Some participants take quite a while to grasp this concept and believe that attendance alone will enable them to complete the program, so this point may need to be repeated several times throughout the first few months.

Summarize:

“In this program each of you will:

- * learn how to pay attention to your thoughts, feeling and underlying rules (by doing thinking reports),
- * learn how to see when your thoughts, underlying rules and principles are leading you toward doing something hurtful,
- * think of new thinking that will lead you someplace else, and
- * practice using this new thinking in real life situations.”

“That is the whole program.”

“When you get good at it you will be able to take control of your life by controlling the direction of your own mind.”

“That’s what Cognitive Self Change is all about.”

Emphasize that this is, indeed, the whole program. It’s simple to understand. And it’s not complicated to do. But doing it well will require lots of practice.

Convey the simplicity of Cognitive Self Change.

Emphasize that neither you nor the group will be making judgments about how a person should think or act. It is an objective process. No one judges what is right or wrong for you to do or think. Each person decides for themselves how they will think and how they will act. The program requires that we learn how to use thinking that avoids crime and violence, but how you use that skill—once you learn it—is up to you.

Homework

At the end of the session ask the group to come to the next session ready to discuss a recent situation where they broke a rule, harmed someone, or were at risk of doing this. The only preparation they need to do is to think of an incident. The situation doesn’t have to be major or serious and facilitators should emphasise that, for this exercise, it is best if it is fairly minor.

It can be useful to give some examples, such as getting some penalty for talking back to a custodial officer or not getting out of bed in time for custodial situations. In community groups, situations such as speeding or road rage can be useful. For juveniles in the community, under age drinking, unlicensed driving or fare evasion are all good examples.



Lesson Two

Activities:

- Review of Lesson One
- Summary of Lesson Two
- Define check-ins
- Practice check-ins

Objectives:

- Group members will begin to recognize the connection between thinking and acting in concrete situations.
- Group members will start to become familiar and comfortable with the steps of a Cognitive Check-in.
- Group members will practice reporting their thoughts and feelings objectively, without blame and without excuses.

1. Review Lesson One:

Review the previous meeting. Check that each member remembers and understands the steps of Cognitive Self Change we walked through with the example of Jason (or whatever example you chose to use). Emphasise that a Thinking Report represents the first step of Cognitive Self Change.

2. Summarize Lesson Two:

“Today we’re going to learn how to do a short version of the Thinking Report called a cognitive check-in. Starting next week, everybody will be expected to present a Check-In at the beginning of every group.

3. Define Cognitive Check-ins:

“Now let’s learn how to do a Cognitive Check-In

“A check-in is a short report about a situation we’ve recently been part of. Any situation will do for a check-in, but we try to find situations where there is some risk in our thoughts and

feelings. That is, we find situations where there could have been some possibility of us doing something hurtful or destructive, even if we didn't.

“A check-in has 3 parts:

Add these points to the chart, under the title, “Cognitive Check-Ins”

Cognitive Check-Ins

Describe the situation and report your thoughts, feelings, underlying rules and principles

Identify the risk in your thoughts, feelings, underlying rules and principles

Describe the new thinking you used or could have used to reduce that risk

“A Cognitive Check-in starts with a shortened thinking report, and goes through the first 3 steps of Cognitive Self Change. Check-ins let us practice Cognitive Self Change with everyday situations. However, in Step One, we will only do the first step of Check-Ins.” It can be useful to reiterate that currently everyone is in Step One, but once the program is up and running, new participants can join at any time so the participants will not all be in the same Step.

4. Practice Cognitive Check-ins:

“Now let's practice doing Cognitive Check-ins. Who is willing to go first?”

“What was the situation you thought of?”

OR (if nobody prepared anything)

“Think of a situation when you felt some degree of stress or irritation or frustration. It could be any situation. It doesn't matter if you did anything. As long as you had some feelings about the situation.

“OK, let's start.”

Lead him through the process. Let him talk about the situation in his own words for a few minutes—then ask him to stop his story, describe the situation succinctly, and report his thoughts and feelings. Make it clear that this is a distinct and different stage of the process. Be patient but be clear. Be sure they get the idea of giving an objective report, without justification and without story-telling. It is a good idea to scribe each Check-In onto the whiteboard/flipchart and keep a record of them. This assists group members to keep track of the process and allows a permanent record of what was discussed. Encourage group members to scribe for one another,

after facilitators have demonstrated what needs to be written up.

It can be useful at this stage to record feelings and thoughts in the appropriate space even if the participant is confusing thoughts and feelings; e.g. “I felt I wanted to kill him” which is clearly a thought, should be listed under thoughts, even if we were prompting for feelings. The participant could then be prompted “What feeling went with that thought?” Sometimes it can be helpful to use the distinction that a feeling usually consists of one word (although hyphenated words such as “pissed-off” are also acceptable as feelings) and if it takes longer than that, it is a thought.

If they get even only one or two thoughts and feelings, that is a good beginning. Reinforce their success. Repeat this process with each group member. Remember, it may take quite some time with each group member, at this stage, the important thing is that each group member starts to gain an idea of what objective reporting of their thoughts and feelings is.

“When you reach Step Two of the program, you will have to identify the risk in your thinking and when you reach Step Three of the program you will need to identify alternative non-risky thinking as part of your Check-In, but for now what you have done is great”.

“In the next group we’ll start with check-ins, then we’ll do some full Thinking Reports. A Thinking Report is like a Cognitive Check-in, only we take more time with each step. The Check-Ins typically have about 4-5 thoughts, but a full Thinking Report will have about 20 thoughts.

Note: If there is time after doing all the Check-ins, facilitators should invite a volunteer to nominate a situation from their Criminal History Sheet to develop into a Thinking Report and take them through the process below. If there is not time, emphasise that each participant is now expected to come to a group with a recent situation where they were at risk of breaking a rule or harming someone (i.e. different to the one they did this session). They need not have actually broken the rule to do a Check-In. Also, get one or two participants to volunteer to use one of the items from their Violence History Sheet to develop a Thinking Report for the next session.

4. Practice Thinking Report:

As before, begin by asking the participant to give the story behind the situation before moving into the formal part of the thinking report.

“How can we describe this situation in just one line?”

Write at the top of the whiteboard:

Sit: [write a short objective description]

“Good. We need to write a thinking report of what is going on in this person’s mind. We always start a thinking report by giving a short, objective description of the situation we are in. A thinking report gives us step 1 of Cognitive Self Change.

“What is the next part of a thinking report? Do you remember?”

Try to get a group member to say, “thoughts.” If no one remembers, say it yourself and write the abbreviation “TH” under the “Sit” statement on the whiteboard.

Now ask the group member to list the thoughts he had at the time of the incident. Write down every thought he can remember, no matter how trivial. At this point you will need to spend a deal of time ensuring that the thoughts were ones that were actually in his head at the time. For example, beginning participants will often report something like “I thought that she was being a real bitch”. We need to probe until they say something that sounds like an actual thought he had at the time such as “You bitch!”. Probes used to get this could

be “What did it sound like in your head at the time?” “If you were having that thought now, what would it sound like?” If they are still not able to do this, try prompting with a guess at what the actual thought was and then checking this for accuracy.

Another trap participants will fall into is justifying the thoughts, rather than just reporting them (“She really is a bitch”). Explain to the participants that we are not interested in whether the thoughts are right, wrong, justified or not, we are only interested in what the thoughts were at the time. Time spent getting this right, at this stage, will be rewarded later when participants will keep themselves on track in this task. Many participants will initially struggle to understand what you are asking for and will be expecting a fairly difficult task. Many will also be expecting you to challenge their thinking and will be quite defensive. Help them to see how simple it is and how safe it is.

Involve other group members into this task and check for their understanding. Does it ‘make sense’ to them? While the key participant has final say on what goes into the thinking report, it is up to him to ensure that other participants understand what was going on in his head at the time of the incident.

Keep going until you have a full picture of the thoughts, which will typically involve up to about 20 separate thoughts, before moving on to feelings.

“Very good. Now, what’s the next part of a thinking report?”

Write down the abbreviation “F” for feelings.

“What were you feeling in this situation?”

Write down the feelings nominated by the key participant. If the participant struggles to nominate any feelings ask for suggestions from other participants, but ensure that the key participant owns the label – “Is that how it felt for you?” Sometimes the suggestions, while not being correct, stimulate the key participant to label the feeling he did have at the time – “It wasn’t so much angry, more like irritated”.

Be careful not to assume the participant had any particular feeling. Some individuals are capable of fairly horrendous violence while remaining quite calm or even happy. If they label their feelings in this vein, take their word for it, rather than searching for a more extreme label – it is important to use the participant’s frame of reference and not to twist this to suit our own beliefs.

“Now, let’s do the last part of the thinking report. This part is the hardest. What are the underlying rules or principles you might have in situations like this one?”

Write down the abbreviation “Rules” and then ask the participant about any underlying rules he had at the time. At this stage of the program, this will often be something he still believes, so if he gets stuck, ask him a general question like “What do you think about [protagonist in the TR situation]?” “What do you think about [a type of person or situation]?” “Do you think [situation] is fair?” When he answers, ask if that was an underlying rule or principle he held at the time. Often, participants will respond by saying “It’s true”, but get them to clarify if they thought it was true at the time. This is part of the process of them learning to understand their own values.

When the process looks to be complete, get the key participant to read through the whole Thinking Report. Then ask him if it looks like a true picture of what was going on for him at the time. If not, ask him how it needs to change to become that and pursue those changes until he believes it represents what was going on for him at the time. Then ask other group members if it makes sense to them. “Can you see how [key participant] was able to [describe his actions] given the thoughts, feelings and underlying rules we have outlined?” “Does it make sense to you that he would do what he did, given what he thought?”

Congratulate the participant on doing this report. Facilitators should remember that this can be an incredibly difficult and powerful task for participants to do. For some it will be the first time they have ever reflected upon their own thinking. Also, just listing these thoughts could cause a deal of emotional distress, as it threatens to destroy one of the psychological defences they may have used to avoid responsibility and hence, to not feel bad about their offending – the belief that the offence “just happened” or was directly “caused” by someone else’s actions. Hence, the congratulations from facilitators should be based on a genuine belief that the participant is making huge steps of personal change – something to be praised.

Explain to the group that they will take this same Thinking Report in Step Two and find the key thoughts that fuelled the harmful or rule breaking thinking and in Step Three we will come up with alternative thinking, which will be practiced and refined in Step Five.

They should be beginning to appreciate the potential power of the Cognitive Self Change process. Encourage them to think of these steps as a powerful tool for controlling their own lives.



Lesson Three

This lesson starts to look like a normal rolling group format. The only difference is that the Check-Ins are likely to take longer than in an established group.

Activities:

- *Facilitate Cognitive Check-ins from every member;
 - *Facilitate Thinking Reports from one or two participants.
- *Objectives:
- *All group members are able to present Check-Ins with coaching.
 - *All group members are interested in the process.
 - *The basis for the group moving to normal format is established.

1. Ask each member to give a Cognitive Check-in.

Do this as per the last lesson. It should be clear to all participants that this is a requirement of each and every session.

While written preparation of the Check-In is not required, facilitators should suggest that this will help some members. Facilitators should be working on each participant's competency at this task. While it is unlikely that most will be able to do this in less than five minutes, at this stage, facilitators should be aiming for this.

2. Ask the group members who were scheduled to present Thinking Reports do so and follow the process outlined in Lesson Two.

As soon as all group members are able to give Cognitive Check-ins focusing just on Step 1, you are ready to begin the on-going group process for Steps One to Four.

Facilitators will need to plan a personal schedule of tasks and presentations for each member of the group. Every group meeting will need to be planned and conducted with careful

attention to the schedules of each group member. Enthusiastic group members can be encouraged to have their presentations ready early, in case another member is absent or not ready to present.

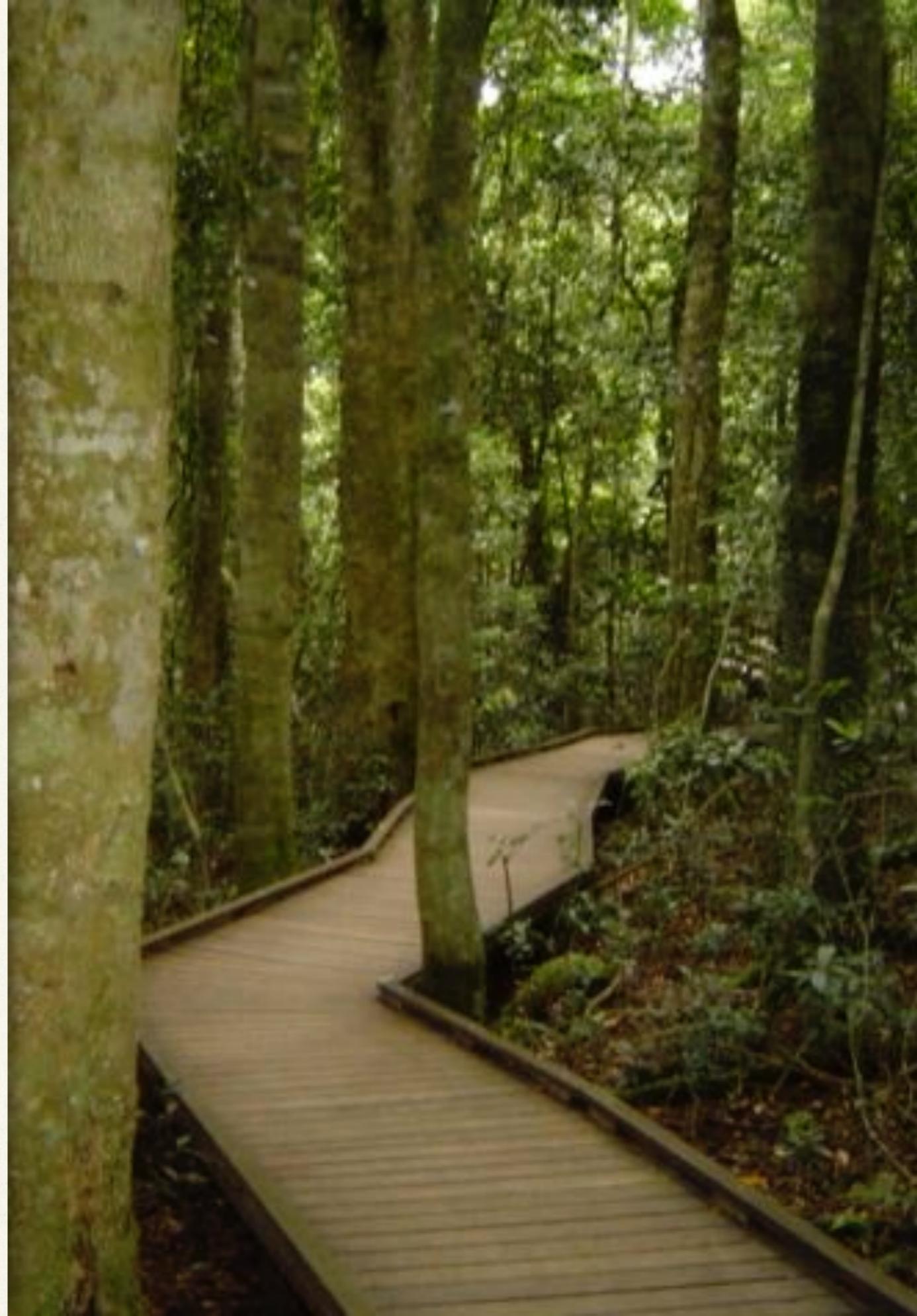
The format for groups from this point on is:

1. A round of Cognitive Check-ins
2. Two to four major presentations: a Thinking Report, a Journal Assignment, or a Personal Self-Risk-Management Plan.

Chapter 9

APPENDIX B: CSC LITE

There are some situations where it is not feasible to deliver CSC in its entirety - particularly when offenders will not be in a particular location for long enough. We often receive requests to re-write CSC for such situations. Here is our attempt to shorten it. However, we do not know whether this will work or not - we would not recommend using CSC-lite to “save time” or resources, but it may be better than nothing. If you have time, do CSC properly.





CSC-Lite

Cognitive Self Change-Lite (CSC-lite) is an adaptation of the Cognitive Self Change Program (CSC). This section should be read in conjunction with the rest of the Cognitive Self Change Manual.

Overview

CSC-lite is a shortened version of CSC designed to assist participants to gain the skills of CSC when the expected duration in the location is too short and/or the time allocated for group is less than the time required for CSC.

Whereas CSC incorporates two phases into each group session (Check-ins followed by Thinking Reports), CSC-lite only has one (Check-ins). While CSC-lite focuses on current behaviour, it can also incorporate past offending, although the Check-in process is still used (i.e. no Step 2B, where the offence is simplified and turned into a cycle diagram as shown in Section 11 of the this manual).

Additionally, there is no minimum amount of work before the participant can graduate to the next level, placing a greater onus on staff to make a judgement about the participant's progress.

Introduction

CSC-lite was developed in response to a situation where there was not enough time to deliver CSC. While we have some good data about the effect of CSC on reoffending, at this point we do not have any data to demonstrate the effectiveness of CSC-lite. Consequently, wherever possible, CSC-lite participants should be referred to CSC if they enter a Centre/Office where CSC is available.

The Process of CSC-lite

Cognitive Check-Ins

The main activity in CSC-lite is Cognitive Check-ins. A Check-in can be done on an event of the last week, a behav-

ious that is happening right now, or a past offence. All these situations involve a rule being broken, or contemplation of breaking a rule.

Stage One participants will do only Step 1 of the Check-in, Stage Two participants will do Step 1 and 2, Stage Three participants will do Steps 1, 2 and 3, and Stage Four participants will do that, plus a role-play of how they could better handle that situation. Alternatively, Stage Four participants may be asked to role-play a different scenario, arising from previous Check-ins.

Once all participants have completed their work, the session ends, unless a participant volunteers to do additional work. If the session ends before all participants have done a Check-in, then the participants who missed out are asked first in the next session.

Progression

Because CSC-lite doesn't require any set minimum amount of work to graduate between the four steps, it is incumbent on facilitators to make a judgement about whether or not the participant has gained a particular skill. Facilitators should be familiar with the relevant sections in the CSC manual and be able to clearly distinguish between participants who can demonstrate a particular skill and those who can't.

One of the most important components of this is to be clear that the onus is on the participant to convince us (and other group members) that they are competent in the particular skill. While we will coach as much as is required to teach them the skill, they need to convince us that they have 'got it' – i.e., they can demonstrate the skill without coaching.

Supportive Authority

The Strategy of Choices is just as important for CSC-lite as it is for CSC. At the heart of Cognitive Self Change is the idea that everybody, even the most high-risk offenders, can make different choices. However, to do so, they need to be aware that they are at a choice point. The Strategy of Choices draws their attention to that – if we fail to do this, we may inadvertently reinforce the belief that he has no choice or that other people 'make' him do things. Consequently, our job in CSC-lite is not to convince the participant to comply with the rules, our job is to challenge them to make a conscious choice, rather than simply acting out of habit.

When delivering the Strategy of Choices (and throughout the program) facilitators need to be supportive, while simultaneously upholding authority – we offer unconditional support to the participant, while upholding the rules of the group and society. Our message to the participant is “We will support you to find ways to live lawfully and happily in society,

but we will not ignore your illegal or rule-breaking behaviour”.

The key to all this is choice: The participant always has the power to choose their path in life. We cannot make them choose the ‘right’ option – this is their choice, not ours. Consequently, you should be comfortable presenting the Strategy of Choices, while remaining neutral and calm. While it is natural to be nervous when first doing this, it is not helpful. While we want him to make the prosocial choice, it is his decision. Therefore, we need to be relaxed about the choice he will make. You may need to rehearse your own thinking which will allow you to feel calm while doing this. Something like “It’s his choice, it always has been. Nothing for me to get stressed over”.

Transitioning from CSC-lite to CSC

A participant may leave CSC-lite in any one of the four stages and enter CSC without ever having done a Thinking Report on any of their offences. CSC facilitators can “catch up” the participant by progressing each Thinking Report through to the stage the participant is at.

If, in doing so, you believe that the participant is not competent at the level below his stated Stage (e.g., he was at Stage 3 in CSC-lite, but cannot clearly identify risky thinking) do not progress beyond his actual competency.

Chapter 10

FORMS

This situation contains forms which have been found to assist in running CSC. The consent form explains the rules of CSC and the progress forms are useful for staff to keep track of participants' progress through the program.

D O M
MAGNIFICAM HANC SPECTATOR QUAM MIRARIS SCALAM
VT COMMODVM AC ORNAMENTVM NON EXIGVVM
REGIO COENOBIO IPSIQ VRBI ALLATVRAM
NIMO CONCEPT LEGATAQ SVPREMIS IN TABVLIS PECVN
VNDE SVMPVS SVPPEDITARENTVR CONSTRVI MANDAVIT
NOBILIS GALEVS STEPHANVS GVEFFIER
VI REGIO IN MINISTERIO DIV PLVRES APVD PONTIFICE
ALIOSQVE SVBLIMES PRINCIPES EGREGIE VERSATVS
ROMAE VIVERE DESIT XXX IUNII M DC LXL
CVS AVTSM VARIO RERVM INTERVENTV
PRIMO SVB CLEMENTE XI
CVM SVB PRESENTENTVR MODVLE ET FORMAE
IN REPLICATIONE POSITVM
DEINDE SVB INNOCENTIO XIII STABILITVM
ELI HUIUSFRANDI MONSINAT TOLOSATIS
MINIMORVM SVB ANTONIO DE TAVLA CORRECTORIS
FIDELI CVM MEMORIAM SVM AC INCHOATVM
TANDEM SVB BENEDICTO XIII FELICITER SEDENTE
CONFLICTV ABSOLVITV MOVE EST
ANNO TABVLARVM DCCLXXV



Consent Form

Cognitive Self Change Program

Agreement to participate and abide by program rules

I acknowledge that I have limited rights to confidentiality regarding my assessment, case management and participation in counselling with the Cognitive Self Change Program.

I understand that limited confidentiality is necessary to protect the community and to assist in the co-ordination and planning of my counselling.

I understand that information I share with any staff member is not privileged or private.

I understand that information regarding assessment, case management and counselling may be communicated verbally or in writing to any individual or agency responsible for my supervision and/or treatment.

I understand that all of the following conditions are necessary for the program to work and, as such, are conditions necessary for me to take part in the program. I also understand

that CSC staff facilitators will work to assure that I succeed in the program, provided I meet these conditions.

1. Attendance & punctuality

- I agree to attend all scheduled CSC groups.
- I agree to be on time for group.

2. Group Participation

- I agree to participate constructively in CSC groups under the direction of CSC staff facilitators.
- I understand that constructive participation includes making an honest effort to help other group members learn and practice the skills of CSC.
- If I have a mobile phone it will be turned off or on silent and I won't answer it or text. I will not listen to music or play with personal electronic devices.

3. Journal Assignments

- I agree to complete all regular and special Journal Assignments when they are due and to make an honest effort to

accomplish the goals of each Journal Assignment as explained by CSC staff facilitators.

4. Unconditional Respect

- I agree to respect other people while participating in CSC groups.
- I understand that unconditional respect means I will show respect to people whether or not I agree with them or approve of them and whether or not I perceive them as showing respect to me.
- I will not bring weapons to group.

5. Open Channel of Communication

- I agree to keep an open channel of communication with CSC group facilitators and group members. This means I will report my thoughts and feelings completely and objectively, without censorship or deliberate distortion, and without keeping secret any areas of my thinking or behaviour that may pose a risk of criminal behaviour.

Name of Client:

Date:...../...../.....

Client signature

Staff member signature

SECTION 24



Progress Form

NAME:		ID #:	
Date Referred:		Date of Birth:	
Assignments	Date Completed	Coached/ Uncoached	Comments
1.1 TR			
1.2 TR			
1.3 TR			
Extra 1.4 TR			
Extra 1.5 TR			
2.1 TR			
2.2 TR			
2.3 TR			
2.4 TR			
Extra 2.5 TR			
Extra 2.6 TR			

Assignments	Date Completed	Coached/ Uncoached	Comments
3.1 TR			
3.2 TR			
3.3 TR			
3.4 TR			
3.5 TR			
Extra 3.6 TR			
Extra 3.7 TR			
3.8 Themes and Patterns			
4.1 New Thinking			
4.2 Practice Log			
4.3 SRMP			

Assignments marked “TR” are Thinking Reports. A minimum of three Thinking Reports are required to graduate from Stage One. However, some participants will require more, hence the “Extra” assignments. In Stage Two and Three the earlier Thinking Reports are updated to the new

stage, followed by at least one more complete Thinking Report.

Chapter 11

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