Motivation for the Maintenance Stage of Recovery

Developing Motivational Discrepancy from (thoughts at) Moments of Physical Relapse
George DuWors, LICSW

- Web/blog: gettingitworkbook.com  
- gduwors@yahoo.com  (425) 213-2657
- Author: White Knuckles and Wishful Thinking, Learning from Relapse in Alcoholism and Other Addictions (Hogrefe, 2000)
- Private Practice: Everett, WA, USA
- Workshops: Motivation for Maintenance, Coping in Recovery
- Workbook: “Getting It - Building Motivation From Relapse” (amazon.com)
- Who are you?
Your “relapse” experience

- As adult learners: Your “x”

- Period of temporary abstinence (PTA)

- What were you thinking at the moment of first going back to “x?” Compare to WKWT! How to replicate.

- So what!? Significance of two kinds of decision, esp. re topic!. What has “hooked” presenter since ‘78.
Two Kinds of Thinking: Two Questions

Wishful and/or expletive at moment of relapse

What motivational discrepancies might be developed from these very thoughts, any/every time they occur, not just for change but for maintenance, too?

Does Twelve Step Recovery recognize and address these discrepancies, explicitly or implicitly?
Objectives

1. Establish empirical reality of two kinds of relapse thinking
2. Identify eight discrepancies inherent in these thoughts, Motivating not just for change but also for maintenance.
3. Spell out AA (implicit or explicit) recognition of the discrepancies, sketching how it protects against each type of relapse.
4. Sketch individual and group ways to develop the discrepancies.
5. Identify maintenance tasks implied by each discrepancy
The Stages of Change

- Precontemplation
- Contemplation
- Preparation (planning, commitment)
- Action
- Maintenance
- Exit
What is Motivation?

- Tip 35, P. 84: “intrinsic motivation often begins at the point when clients recognize the discrepancies between “where they are” and “where they want to be.”

- TIP35,P45. “You can help your client perceive discrepancy on a number of different levels, from physical to spiritual, and in different domains, from attitudinal to behavioral.”
Defining Example of “Motivational Discrepancy”

Consider this example given by Premack (1970) of a man who dates his quitting smoking from a day on which he had gone to pick up his children at the city library. A thunderstorm greeted him as he arrived there; and at the same time a search of his pockets disclosed a familiar problem: he was out of cigarettes. Glancing back at the library, he caught a glimpse of his children standing out in the rain, but he continued round the corner, certain that he could find a parking space, rush in, buy the cigarettes, and be back before the children got seriously wet. The view of himself as a father who would actually leave the kids in the rain while he ran after cigarettes... was humiliating, and he quit smoking.
Part I: Four Motivational Discrepancies at Moment of “Wishful Relapse” (Acronym “MOWS”)

Exercise BLINDING FLASH OF THE OBVIOUS
(Available in WKWT as “Exhaustion of the Obvious” and in workbook as "BFOTO"

- (BE IN) WISHFUL RELAPSE SCENARIO,
- BRAINSTORM
- IN/OUT ____________________
- _________ AT MOMENT OF CHOICE?
- REACTION?
“M” is for “Memory”

- Wishful motivational discrepancy number one:
- “That I would actually forget the pain I had felt/caused due to use, dooming me to repeat and add to it.”
- Maintenance task: remember the actual pain associated with use!
AA In Italics

- “WE ARE UNABLE, AT CERTAIN TIMES, TO BRING INTO CONSCIOUSNESS WITH SUFFICIENT FORCE THE MEMORY OF THE SUFFERING AND HUMILIATION OF EVEN A WEEK OR A MONTH AGO.” AA, P24

- WHAT IF PREMACK’S SMOKER FORGOT?!
How to Develop

Open-ended questions (after eliciting wishful thinking, perhaps, quantifying the experience): What do you make of that? What do you see changing? What would have to be different? Anything trouble you about that?

“Addiction Conviction Scale” (In White Knuckles and Wishful Thinking)

“Memory scale” in Addiction Professional 4/06 search “DuWors.” Link on my web page.

Workbook: “Memory scale.”
“O” IS FOR “OWNERSHIP

- “WISHFUL DISCREPANCY # 2:
  - THAT I ACTUALLY HAVE NO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL IN MY BRAIN AT THE MOMENT I DECIDE TO PICK UP THE FIRST DRINK/DRUG OF RELAPSE, THAT IT IS ACTUALLY MY SOBER SELF WHO MAKES THIS DECISION, AND WHO HAS ACTUALLY FAILED TO SEE THAT FOR ALL OF THESE YEARS AND/OR RELAPSES.

- MAINTENANCE TASK: DEVELOP, PRESERVE, AND DEEPEN CONSCIOUSNESS OF OLD ROLE IN ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES
If you don’t take the first drink, you can’t get drunk!

“These observations would be academic and pointless if our friend never took the first drink, thereby setting the terrible cycle in motion. Therefore, the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind rather than in his body.” P. 23

Step Four: “Inventory,” Our side of the street, our part in it.  Step Ten, spotcheck inventory
HOW TO DEVELOP

“Exhaustion of the Obvious” and “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” in *White Knuckles and Wishful Thinking.*

Reliving moment combined with closed-ended questions – Who made that decision? What was your BAL at that moment?

“BFOTO” - Individual exercise in workbook.
W” is for Willpower

- Wishful Discrepancy # 3:
  - That I decide to limit my drinking and actually fail, decide to quit altogether and actually fail at that, too.

- MAINTENANCE TASK: Find a source of power or energy that exceeds both my personal decision-making and my cravings, wherever or whatever that source may be. Get help!

- AA, Page 44,... “If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic."
“S” is for Sanity

- Wishful Discrepancy # 4:
  - That I actually make this fatal decision based on something other than reality - whether you call it irrational, wishful, or delusional.

- MAINTENANCE TASK: MAKE STAYING IN REALITY THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF MY LIFE, ACCEPTING HELP AS NECESSARY.

- AA: Step Two! “We call this plain insanity."

- Page 37- 38, comparison to jaywalker..." Where alcohol has been involved, we have been strangely insane."

- Comparison to schizophrenic
Part II: THE EXPLETIVE RELAPSE

- MEANINGLESSNESS OF WORDS!
- SOBER AT THE MOMENT!
- FOUR DISCREPANCIES/REALIZATIONS, SOME OVERLAP, Form the acronym "QUIC"
Exercise: “Expletive Deleted”

- Clients’ own “translations” of “darnit.”
- Extending the “bullets” they give.
- Filling in the “dotted line”
- What it says about nature of “darnit” relapse, what is necessary to prevent.
“Q” is for “Quitting!”

- Expletive Discrepancy #1”
  (Developed from direct “translation”)

  “That I am actually ‘throwing in the towel,’ giving up the effort to cope responsibly and/or remain abstinent when I say “darnit” and pick up the first drink/drug!”

  MAINTENANCE TASK: Find a way to persevere without use, no matter what happens, forever.
AA on **Not Quitting**

- "One day at a time!"
- "By the inch it's a cinch - by the yard it's hard."
- "Don't give up before the miracle."
- "God grant me the serenity..."
- "Just go to meetings and don't drink in between."
- "Let go and let God."
- Page 85,.. "What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition..."
“U” IS FOR “UNCARING”

- Expletive Discrepancy # 2: (developed directly from “translations”)

- “That I actually tell myself I do not care when I do, and act as if I do not care when I actually do, guaranteeing I damage and/or lose what I care about!”

- Note on “double denial” – what has already happened (frustration) vs what will (consequences.)

- MAINTENANCE TASK: Reduce, tolerate, manage the vulnerability of caring, for the rest of my life.
AA on caring/not caring
(Wanting/not wanting)

- Page 62,..."The alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot,"
- page 64,..."Resentment is the 'number one' offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else."
- Serenity Prayer paraphrase
- Step three: "we have stopped fighting anything or anybody."
- Page 417,... And acceptance is the answer to all my problems today."
- Page 420,..."my serenity is inversely proportional to my expectations."
“I” is for “Immaturity”

- Expletive Motivational discrepancy #3: (developed by “emotional age” question)

- “That I would actually be throwing a tantrum, and/or reacting about like a three-year-old when I said “darnit” and picked up first drink/drug!

- MAINTENANCE TASK: Meet childhood needs when possible while maintaining adult responses when necessary, forever
“C” is for “Coping”

- Expletive Motivational Discrepancy # 4: (Developed by processing “translations,” primary therapeutic goal of “Expletive Deleted.”)

- “That I am actually so incapable of coping without turning to my chemical crutch(es).

- A “fix” is ________________________________

- MAINTENANCE TASK: Learn coping skills and maintain the ability, willingness to use them, forever.
AA on coping discrepancy

- Page 37,... in some circumstances we have gone out deliberately to get drunk, feeling ourselves justified by nervousness, anger, worry, depression, jealousy or the like.

- Page 60,... "The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis we are almost always in collision with something or somebody,..."

- Book: Living Sober
SUMMARY

- TWO KINDS OF RELAPSE. DSM wannabe’s!
- LOOKING BACK AT MOMENTS OF DECIDING TO TAKE FIRST DRINK/DRUG OF PHYSICAL RELAPSE.
- LOOKING FOR “GAP” OF “WHO” OR “WHAT.”
- 4 REALIZATIONS/DISCREPANCIES FROM “WISHFUL” – MEMORY, OWNERSHIP, WILLPOWER, SANITY, “MOWS.” “That I would actually…..”
- 4 FROM “EXPLETIVE:” QUITTING, UNCARING, IMMATURE, COPING, “QUIC.”
- GOAL: Help person “realize” need for BOTH change and maintenance.
- Also use for assessment, targeted treatment.
Objectives Met?

1. Establish empirical reality of two kinds of relapse thinking
2. Identify eight discrepancies inherent in these thoughts, Motivating not just for change but also for maintenance.
3. Spell out AA (Implicit or explicit) recognition of the discrepancies, sketching how it protects against each type of relapse.
4. Sketch individual and group ways to develop the discrepancies.
5. Identify maintenance tasks implied by each discrepancy