

HANDOUT SOC-1

WILL SUMMERS

W

ill Summers grew up in a very religious home. As a little boy, he took great pride in being a “good boy” — doing well in school, attending church with his parents, and participating in a range of after-school activities organized by the church.

When he turned 12, Will found that his interests were changing. He was fascinated by engines and motors, and wanted to spend time with friends with similar interests. His parents disapproved of these friends. Will thought this was unfair and tried to convince his parents to allow him to see his new friends. When his parents refused, Will was confused and angry. He'd sneak out, and when he got caught, there were angry confrontations, with lots of yelling. Will would be grounded.

As Will continued into his teenaged years, the once happy Summers house was marked by either open battles or silent anger. Will's grades in the subjects he liked — science, math and mechanics — were still pretty good. But he didn't do well in other subjects. And by the time he was 15, he would simply leave home to party with his friends even though he was grounded. He drank a bit, he smoked dope a bit, and on the rare occasion, he really overdid it.

When Will was 17 and his girlfriend Jennifer told him she was worried about his partying, he laughed. “Loosen up,” he'd say. “Everybody does this. It's no big deal.” Even though he'd laughed it off, Will did worry about his using for a while after that. But it was such a downer. Within a week, he'd sort of shrugged off his concerns.

One day when he was 18, Will woke up with a hangover on a school day, and just managed to drag himself to class. He got test results back that day and found that he had failed an important test in one of his favorite subjects. When he ran into his girlfriend, Jennifer, and told her what had happened, she wasn't sympathetic. She said “Hey Will, I've been telling you for a while that you were losing it, but you just wouldn't listen.”



Handout SOC-1 (*continued*)

That day marked the beginning of a change. Will started to think about his future and got scared picturing himself unable to hold a job, struggling with hangovers. He decided he had to get his life in order. Over the next few months, Will got a part-time job and moved out of his parents' home. He picked up his marks, cut down on his partying, and moderated his use of alcohol and marijuana. When he was tempted to overdo it, he'd work out, or go somewhere nice with Jennifer instead.

Within six months, Will had been accepted at a community college, in an apprenticeship program for mechanics. He went off the rails briefly a year later, when Jennifer broke up with him. Depressed over the end of the relationship, he spent a week doing heavy drink and drugs. But then he got his act together.

Now, at age 21, Will's just accepted a job as a mechanic. He's moving into a new apartment, and he's stopped using drinks and drugs completely. He feels good about himself. When he looks back, however, he feels ashamed. "What a jerk I was!" he says to himself.

HANDOUT SOC-2

STAGES OF CHANGE

PRECONTEMPLATION

People in this stage are still using and are unaware of having problems related to using. They are not yet ready for active change. This stage is sometimes also referred to as denial.

Compared to people in other stages of change, Precontemplators process less information about their problems, they spend less time and energy re-evaluating themselves, they experience fewer emotional reactions to the negative aspects of their behavior and they do little to confront and resolve their problems.

CONTEMPLATION

People in this stage are aware of some of the negative consequences of their behavior and they are beginning to actively think about the need to change. But they are often “torn” about changing their usage patterns. One part of them knows that they should change their behavior, but another part resists the change (“Oh forget it — it’s really not so bad!”). The outcome of this inner struggle determines whether the person proceeds to the Determination stage.

DETERMINATION

People in this stage are aware of the negative consequences of their using and they want to change the behavior, but they haven’t yet committed themselves to making that change. During this phase, people are trying to “determine” whether to fall back into the contemplation or pre-contemplation phases, or go forward into the Action phase. Those that decide to go forward start to prepare to actually take some action.

ACTION

People in this stage of change initiate actions designed to change the problem behaviors. This is the shortest stage, when the individual is most enthusiastic and energetic. People in this stage want to get involved in activities that will bring immediate results. If they’re successful, they enter the next phase.

MAINTENANCE

During this stage, people work to continue the gains made during the Action stage, and to prevent relapses. They try to achieve a healthy lifestyle. If successful, they can stay in the maintenance phase...forever.

RELAPSE

During relapse, people “slip” back into previous usage patterns. When this happens, these people can start the whole process again — though often they move directly to contemplation, rather than starting the process with precontemplation.

HANDOUT SOC-3

IS THIS A MODEL FOR THE STAGES?

Precontemplation



Contemplation



Determination



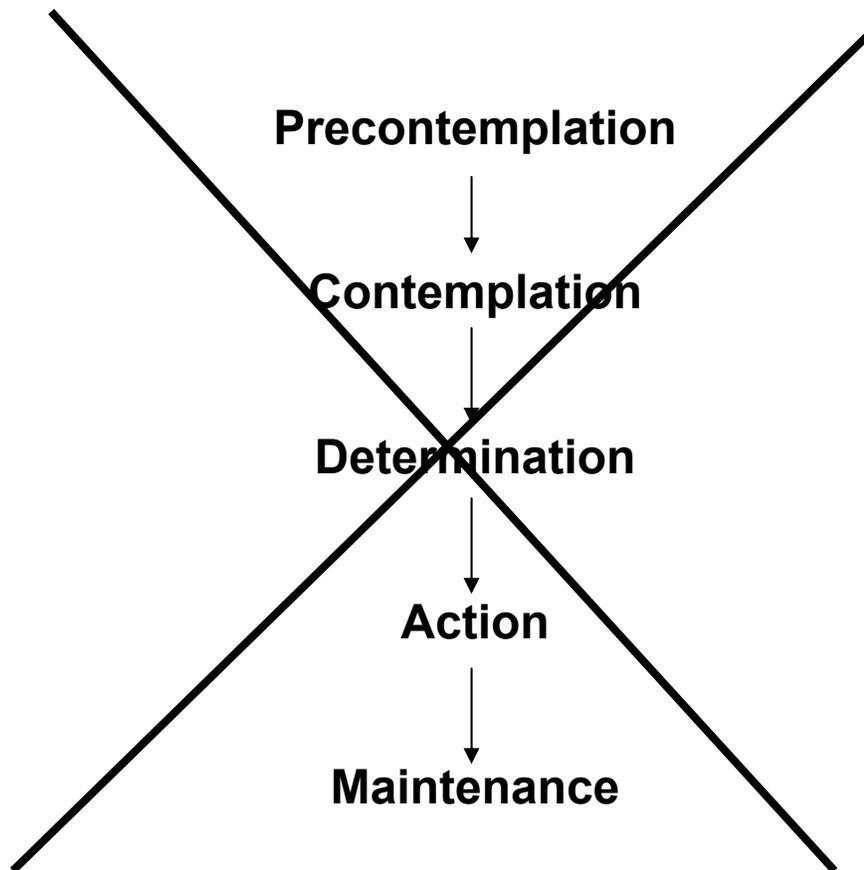
Action



Maintenance

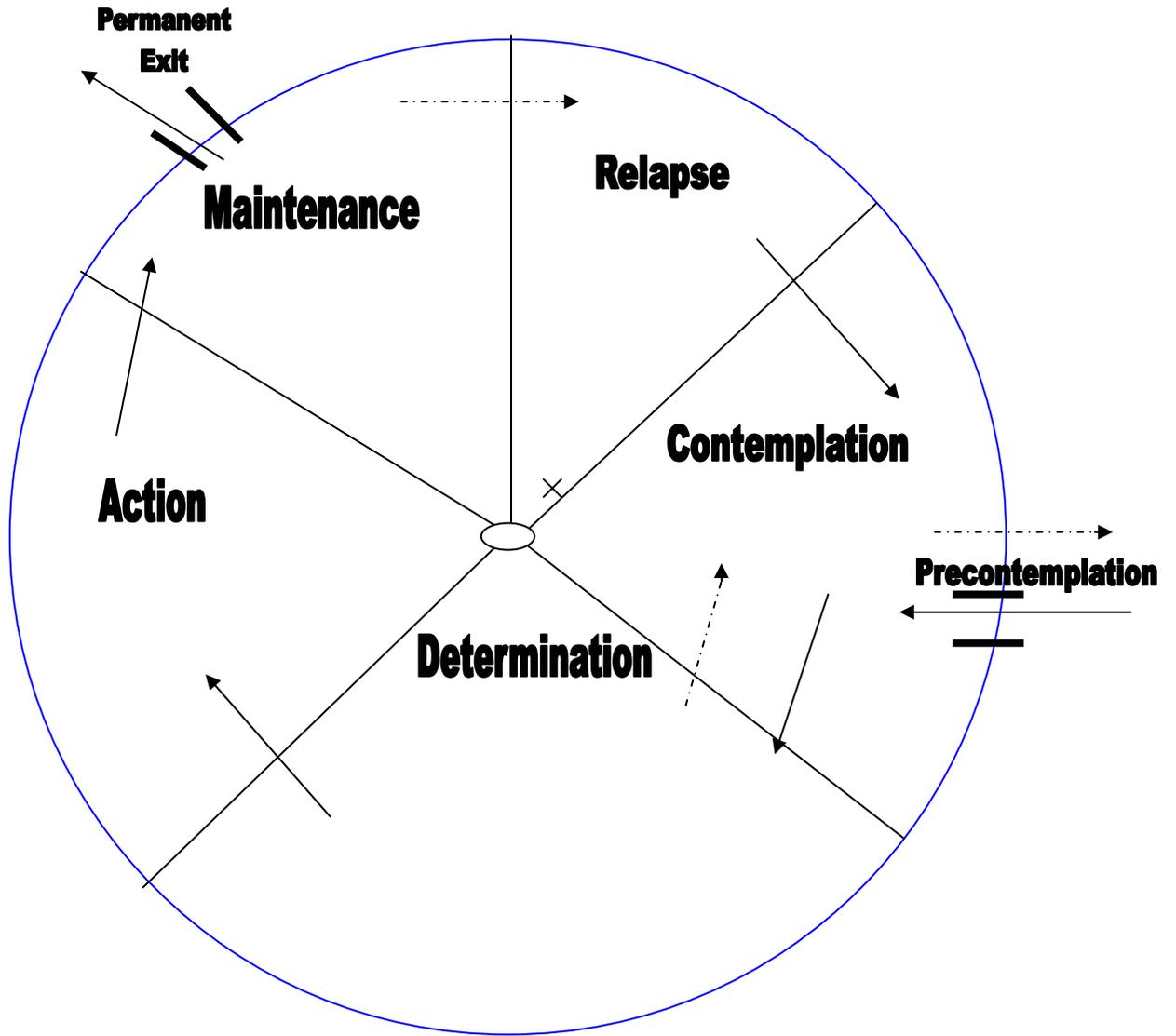
HANDOUT SOC-4

A FLAWED MODEL



HANDOUT SOC-5

STAGES OF CHANGE MODEL



HANDOUT SOC-6

GUIDELINES FOR MOVING THROUGH STAGES OF CHANGE

Precontemplation

- Attend to outsiders' views of the behavior. Ask, "*Is there any validity to them?*" Begin decisional balance analysis: What are the pros and cons of the behavior?

Contemplation

- Attend to inside views. How do YOU feel about the behavior, and the impact it has on you and on others?
- Decisional balance — what are the pros and cons of changing?
- Get information about costs and benefits.
- Think about whether you're prepared to pay the price to get the benefits.

Preparation/Determination

- Identify options, and do a decisional balance analysis of each.
- Choose one realizing that you can always try another if your first choice doesn't work.

Action

- Carry out the plan.
- Assess the plan.
- If required, go back to the previous stage and look for other options.

Maintenance

- Explore ways of supporting the new behavior.
- Ask others for help in maintaining.

Relapse

- Don't label yourself "bad." Focus on the experience, not on you as a person, and look at the experience as "useful" — providing information to refine the maintenance plan.

WORKSHEET SOC-7

JEFFERSON HOPEWELL

SITUATION

Jefferson Hopewell is a success. He grew up in a poor family with an abusive father. Despite these disadvantages, he worked hard at school, and held part-time jobs, and managed to put himself through university. He was determined to make something of himself — to show his father and all the other people in the small town where he grew up, that all Hopewells weren't losers.

Today, Jefferson has a high-paying job in a big engineering firm, he travels on business, and he has an active social life. Social drinking is an important part of this life — there are drinks after work, he takes clients out for drinks, when he golfs on the weekend with colleagues they drink throughout most of the afternoon.

When Jefferson's sister visits him for a week, she is troubled by what she sees. "Jeff," she says "I think you've got a problem here, and you'd better get a grip on it." Jefferson is furious with her. "You're just jealous" he says. "This is a type of life you can't possibly imagine. Go home and grow up."

QUESTIONS

- 1.** What stage of change is Jefferson in?
- 2.** What recommendations would you give him, based on the Guidelines for Moving Through the Stages of Change?
- 3.** Add another paragraph to the situation, describing Jefferson as you imagine him at some other stage of change.

WORKSHEET SOC-8

MATT DOUGLAS

SITUATION

Matty Douglas is 24 years old. Recently his best friend Troy got married and it sort of shook Matty up. He and Troy grew up together, and were part of a group of about five guys who earned well-deserved reputations as party animals in high school. And it didn't stop there. After high school, most of them held a succession of part-time jobs and short-term girlfriends. But those were like hobbies. Their real focus in life was PARTYING — drinking and drugs all night and trying to act like you didn't feel it the next day.

When Troy got married, Matt realized he was the only one left still living that lifestyle. Sort of without him noticing it...every one else had moved on, into stable relationships, and full-time work. Matt is afraid now that life might be passing him by. He's spent some time trying to think of ways of turning his life around, but then sometimes he gets kind of angry, because he's had so much fun living the way he has since he and Troy were teenagers.

QUESTIONS

- 1.** What stage of change is Matt in?
- 2.** What recommendations would you give him, based on the Guidelines for Moving Through the Stages of Change?
- 3.** Add another paragraph to the situation, describing Matt as you imagine him at some other stage of change.