

## **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Relapse Prevention for Substance use (STEPS) Session ONE**

**Remember to Keep the Discussion Engaged and Do Not Judge! Ask Questions  
as Much as You Can!**

- 1. Welcome and check in on safety (as needed) and update measures/progress monitoring.**
- 2. Review information from last session**
  - a. Ask the client to tell you what they remember/learned and move to homework review.
  - b. Homework Review**
    - i. Go over what they did, praise for doing it.
    - ii. IF homework was NOT completed: Normalize that this can be hard, ask questions to find out what the challenge was and complete the homework with them in session.
- 3. What**

“Today we are going to talk about your uses of alcohol or other substances you may use. I can assure you that I will not judge you, and it is completely confidential (I will not share anything you say to me).”
- 4. Why**

“It is important that we are able to talk openly about your use of alcohol (and other drugs), because it can be important for your health and for relationships in the family and community.”
- 5. Description of alcohol use (and/or other drug use)**
  - a) “I would like to start by reviewing the substance use measure you completed last week that addressed your use of substances.” Walk through the measure and ask the client any clarifying questions.
    - Remind them it is important to be honest and there is no judgment- we are here to support them.
  - b) “Tell me how alcohol/substance use fits into your life. What does it look like for you?”
  - c) I would like to work together on a worksheet (SU Information worksheet) to understand more about your use of substances.”
    1. “The time periods when you use alcohol/drugs. (Q1).
      - a) “This may be always at 5pm or when you get off work, or maybe all day on Saturdays. Name other times you may use also, for example celebrations.”

2. The places where you use and/or buy alcohol/drugs. (Q2).
  - b) “This may be at bars or a friend’s house or at your own home alone. These are places you typically drink/use drugs.”
3. The people with whom you use alcohol/drugs. (Q3)
  - c) “This might be a large number of people in your friendship circle, or it may be just one person – for example your close friend, sibling or family member. You may drink/use drugs by yourself (when you are alone) as well. If that is true for you, please list “by myself” under here also.”

#### 6. Engaging and getting buy-in

- a) “Now that we have written down what, when, where and how much you may drink or use drugs, let’s start looking for reasons you may want to reduce the use of alcohol/drugs.
- b) “Let’s start by writing down **what you think about alcohol/drug use?** (Q4) Share whatever comes to mind. Thoughts may include positive things like “I really like drinking/using”, or something you gain from drinking/using, something you don’t like about drinking/using, or something you may want to change.” Write them down.
 

\*\* Probes for counselor, if needed:

  - “What about some cultural or social things about alcohol/drug use?”
  - “What about challenges to reducing the use of alcohol/drugs? For example sometimes my clients say things like “my friends won’t respect me anymore, or I would have to go home and just fight with my spouse”.
  - Other Examples:
    - Drinking/drugs is something I enjoy.
    - I feel better (less stressed, happier) when I drink/use drugs.
    - It’s not really a problem.
    - I’ll never be able to stop.
    - All my friends drink/use drugs and if I stop, I will lose those friends.
    - I am better at sex when I am drinking/using
- c) “**Now let’s write down some effects of using alcohol/drugs.** These could be good effects or bad effects, effects on families, marriages, parent/child relationship, or friends.”
  - Examples: Health is poor; I am a more fun person on alcohol; I yell more at my wife; I get angry and/or hit my children, I don’t have as much money, I have a lot of friends and we go to the bar together.
  - “Some of these “effects” may be reasons people use alcohol/drugs and some may be reasons why they may want to REDUCE their use of alcohol/drugs.”

7. **Summary:** “You have told me about some different examples and situations in your life where drugs/alcohol may have had some positive effects (List positives the client mentioned specifically noting that these are SHORT TERM gains). But also it has had some negative effects, like (List out longer negative list and note that these are LONG TERM effects).”
8. **“What would you think about making a change so you could have fewer of the negative effects of drinking/using?”**
9. **Talking about REDUCTION:** “You have done a fantastic job! Now that we see there are some negative effects, let’s explore what it looks like to cut down. Let’s start by talking about what REDUCTION in use of alcohol/drugs might be. “
  - a. “For example, one way may be to reduce the number of nights you go to the bar, or reduce the amount of time you spend each night at the bar. Another reduction may be from 10 drinks a night to 8 drinks, or 5 drinks. What are other examples of ways to reduce alcohol/drug use that you think you could do?”
  - b. “Let’s write down on your worksheet something you might be able to do to reduce your use of alcohol/drugs. This may be easy and you might have multiple ideas, or you might find this very difficult now and feel like you don’t have any ideas. Or you may not want to reduce your use of alcohol/drugs right now. You can write down something you are just considering for now. Or even that you don’t want to reduce your use of alcohol/drugs.”
10. **Praise Participation:**
  - a. “You are doing great today and working to write down possibilities of reduction!”
11. **Identifying supports:** “Now let’s discuss people that could help support you in your goal of cutting back drinking/drug use. These are people who could help you with your goal, or they could be someone who you might consult with or get their advice on your use of alcohol/drugs. The person you choose here should NOT be someone you regularly drink with – but someone who would support or encourage reduction. What are some examples of people we might turn to for support?”
  - a. Examples: Partner, friend, brother, uncle, mother
  - b. “Let’s write those who might be able to support you here in Q #7 of the worksheet.
  - c. “Often times it can be helpful if that support person also comes in and learns a bit more about the program. With many of our clients we try and meet with a supportive friend or family member that can help support them in their goal. We usually meet with the person a few times. First we

explain what the program is about then we provide them with some basic education around alcohol and substance use and we also teach some skills in how to be supportive. Would you want us to meet with any of the supports you selected? If so we can help to arrange a time when we can meet with them. You also don't need to decide now you can think about it and let us know next session.”

12. **Rating Scale on motivation to Reduce Use:** “Now I want to show you a rating scale. We will be using these a lot in our work together. I am going to just use a scale of 1-10. 10 means you are fully committed and very excited about changing your drinking habits. 1 means you don’t really want to make any changes. It is critical that you are honest with yourselves. It is normal to be excited to change right away, but it’s also normal if you are unsure about how you could reduce your drinking or you may not want to reduce at this time. This rating may change over our time together through all our sessions and even through the session today. We will look at this scale again even before we end session today.
- a. “Let’s fill in Q#8 and rate your own commitment to cutting back on your use of alcohol/drugs – on the goal you stated. So circle on the scale of 0-10 how interested you are in the goal you listed. If you did not name a goal, you can circle a 1 as not wanting to make any changes in your use of alcohol/drugs if that is still true for you.
  - b. If the client says they are between 8-10, ask them what makes them so motivated. If the client has 1-5, ask them why not [NAME A NUMBER LOWER THAN THEIR NUMBER] – what is making them motivated at that level? The key is to be VERY positive about whatever rating they give.
13. **Finding their “reasons”:** Now I want us to work together to find out what the reasons are for your drinking/drug use. Understanding our individual reasons for drinking/drug use can help us know how to move to reducing our drinking/drug use.
- a) “What are some reasons you think you use alcohol/drugs? These are”
  - b) If the client has difficulty coming up with reasons use some of the prompts below:
    - “What about social reasons? It’s something your friends do together? Or peer pressure?”
    - What about health reasons?
    - “What about stress in life? What are some stressors that could be reasons that you use alcohol/drugs?”
    - “What about a habit – or just because there is nothing else to do? Boredom?”

- “What are some things you think alcohol/drugs help with? For example, many people think alcohol helps with sleep, or helps to make us feel happy when we are sad.
- “Sometimes a reason we use alcohol/drugs is so that we can avoid something – like a place, certain people, or even memories or thoughts. Can you think of any reasons related to avoidance?”

#### **14. Do Circle Activity (Refer to the Circle Activity Worksheet)**

- **“Reasons:** “We have been talking about reasons why you use alcohol/drugs. This is a worksheet I want to use to write those reasons down and start thinking of different skills we could use to reduce your use of alcohol/drugs.
- Let’s start by putting in reasons you drink into each of these circles. For each reason we are going to rate it as how strong a reason it is for you to drink/use drugs. A 10 would be the strongest most powerful reason you use.

**15. Skills/Strategies for reducing use:** Now let’s talk about HOW you might be able to reach your goals for reducing drinking. We are going to take each of your “REASONS” and look for strategies to help with each of these.

#### **CHOICE OF STRATEGY SKILLS**

**16. The counselor should choose which skill is best to teach first for their client.**

As you teach the skill, it should be written in the box next to the reason it addresses. Chose from:

- Saying no skill
  - Letting the urge pass
  - Finding new activities
  - Carrying reminders
  - Avoiding places with alcohol
- a) **“Saying no skill”:** This is often used in cases when the client’s reason is social, and they get peer pressure to drink/use drugs.
- “We are going to practice a role play where you are a friend trying to get me to go to the bar, and I am going to demonstrate an example of saying no. Saying no can be hard when friends or family are asking us to do something.” Do role play.
  - “How difficult do you think this would be on a rating of 0-10?” Focus on what can help them think they can do it (rather than the challenges). “What are some things that make you think it is possible?”
- b) **“Letting the urge pass”:** This is usually used when someone really craves or has “urges” for drinking or using drugs.
- “One of your reasons was just having a strong want or urge to drink/use drugs. An urge is something that you do NOT have to act on – but that is

not always easy. We can learn a skill here about how to “let the urge pass”.

- I would like for us to sit on the floor now in a position that is somewhat uncomfortable. This may be crossing your legs or having your legs straight out in front of you. I want to just sit here for a bit, and notice that we are a bit uncomfortable. Maybe your legs are tight and you have the urge to move around or stand up. Maybe you have an itch and have an urge to scratch. You may be thinking – “I really want to move”. Right now we are practicing how to resist an urge.” After about 5 minutes, have the client move back to their original spot.
  - “Let’s talk about that experience. Now you have experienced an urge – they are things that come and go, and it is our choice if we focus on it, or let it pass. “How difficult do you think this would be on a rating of 0-10?” Focus on the strength building aspect of this. Ask why a 8—rather than 9 or 10 (hardest)? What aspects help you to think you can do it?
  - Was there anything that helped you get through the urge to move? For example did you tell yourself anything that was helpful/motivating? What might help you get through an urge to drink/use drugs? For example in the moment of the urge what could you say to yourself to help you let the urge pass?
- f. Finding new activities: This is often used when a reason is boredom, habit, or having fun when they drink. You are trying to replace drinking/using drugs with other activities that serve the same purpose.
- i. “One of your reasons was having fun/relaxing when you drink/use. One strategy we use to REDUCE use is replacing drinking/drug use with another action or activity. Let’s try and come up with a list together of other activities that you could do after work that are “fun” or relaxing that you have a good time at? Write these down.
  - a. Examples: going to church, a soccer game, getting a coke with someone, doing a physical activity
- c. Carrying reminders: This is a helpful strategy when someone has a strong motivation to stop.
- 1. “One of your thoughts was that you don’t know why you keep drinking/using drugs and that it is just hard to stop. Sometimes we need a reminder to help motivate/encourage us to do something so that we don't forget. For example, you could carry something to remind yourself of the reason you are trying to reduce your use – a picture of your child or wife, a family member, friends that you have lost that would not want you using.

2. Other example: You could have a piece of paper with a new thought or picture of a goal on it to remind you – such as “I need to pay my rent.” “I promised my son/daughter I would be home early tonight.”

d) Avoiding places with alcohol/drugs: This is a helpful strategy when the reasons have to do with “ease” or “habit” of passing by or being in places where alcohol/drugs are available.

- “One of the reasons you mentioned was that you pass the bar/liquor store on your way home every day and it is hard to pass up. One strategy that may help you reach your goal of reducing use is to think about ways you could avoid walking by the bar/liquor store, or places where you are likely to use alcohol drugs.
- An example may be finding a different route home from work where you do not pass the bar/liquor store. Or planning to watch sporting matches somewhere where there is no alcohol.

17. **Setting Goals:** “Now let’s discuss changes you could make this week in your use of alcohol/drugs. These will be your “goals”.

- a. “You can look back to the goal you put earlier on your Circle Activity worksheet. This may still be the same or you may have some different ideas for a goal after some of the work we just did together. Write down what your goal may be to reduce some use of alcohol or drugs.
- b. “Choose a reason and strategy you may want to target this week to help you reach your goal.”
  - i. NOTE: if the goal seems impossible/unlikely you may need to help the client break this down into smaller steps
- c. “Now let’s write who could support you on your goal.”
- d. “Now let’s do our rating scale again. Remember, 10 means you are fully committed and very motivated to achieve your goal. 1 means you are not really wanting to make any changes, or that you do not have much motivation to achieve your goal. It is critical that you are honest with yourselves. It is normal to be motivated to change right away, but it’s also normal to feel some uncertainty, and sometimes clients I work with are not very motivated at all to change. This rating may change over our time together through all our sessions”

18. **Summarize what you have done so far**

- a. “So as a summary, we did a Circle Activity worksheet on each of your specific reasons why you may drink, and started talking about some skills or strategies we could use for each reason. We talked about

what your goal may be, who could support you, and what your motivation is to achieve that.

**19. Practice.**

- a. Review the goal and when/how they will do it this week.
- b. Ask the client to monitor his or her drinking/drug use in the next week.  
“Will you keep track of how much you drink/use drugs next week so we can see if the plan is working?”

REMEMBER HOMEWORK STEPS: WHAT WHEN, HOW LONG, REMINDER, RATE FEELINGS BEFORE AND AFTER

## **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Relapse Prevention for Substance use (STEPS) Session TWO**

**Remember to Keep the client Engaged and Do Not Judge! Ask Questions as Much as You Can!**

- 1. Welcome and check in on safety (as needed) and update measures/progress monitoring.**
  
- 2. Review information from last session**
  - a. Ask the client to tell you what they remember/learned.
  - b. Homework Review**
    - i. Go over what they did, praise for doing it.
    - ii. IF homework was NOT completed: Normalize that this can be hard, ask questions to find out what the challenge was and complete the homework with them in session.
  
- 3. Substance Use reporting**
  - a. “Let’s discuss your use this week. Remember it is important that you are honest about your use of alcohol or drugs this week. There is no judging – I am here to help and support you.” Get client to identify if they followed their homework – successes and challenges.

**4. What**

“Today we are going to continue talking about your use of alcohol (or name the other substance they use). I can assure you that I will not judge you, and it is completely confidential (I will not share anything you say with anyone).



## 5. Why

“It is important that we are able to talk openly about your use of alcohol/drugs, because it can be important for your health and for relationships in the family and community”.

## 6. Review Circle Activity

- a. “We are going to work together again on our circle activity to try to understand more about your use of alcohol.
  - a. Reasons: First we have been talking about reasons why you may use alcohol/drugs. (You can take out the piece of paper where you wrote the list with the client last week).
    1. “Let’s look back on your worksheets from last week and see if your “reasons” still fit. You can add some or change some. Many times after thinking for a week, you may come back with new ideas.”
  - ii. Skills/Strategies: “Now let’s do some more brainstorming HOW you are going to reach your goals for reducing your drinking or drug use. We learned last week \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in what skills you worked on already). Today we are going to learn some others.”
    1. Counselor does another skill IF it will help the client. You may also review a skill you taught last week.
      - a. Saying no skill
      - b. Letting the urge pass
      - c. Finding new activities
      - d. Carrying reminders
      - e. Avoiding places with alcohol

7. **ABC worksheet**: “Now I’d like to work on a new sheet that may help you better learn about your reasons for drinking, the reasons you may want to reduce your drinking/drug use, and the effects of your use of alcohol/drugs.”

- i. “Let’s review this worksheet. You will see that there are some examples here. We are just listing out what happens before you drink, while you are drinking, and after you drink. Let’s read the 1<sup>st</sup> example.”
- ii. Now let’s try to fill in a row that fits with your own drinking/drug use.

## 8.) Goal setting.

**“Now we are going to come up with a goal again for this week.** Let’s go back to our last question #9 on our worksheet. What is a goal you think you could work on this week? I want you to focus on one goal and what you are hoping to gain with that goal. It can be the same goal as last week or it might change.”

- iii. Example: reduce the number of nights I go out to 2 nights a week with my friends at the bar. I think this change will make my family happier with me.”
- iv. “Choose a reason and strategy you may want to target this week to help you reach your goal and once you have it let’s write it here.”

## **8. Practice**

- a) “I would like us to practice in session what your plan is to complete your goal.”
    - a. Facilitator will role-play with the client.
  
  - b) Problem solve anything that might make it hard to do the plan
    - a. “Is there anything that would make it hard to do this plan this week?”
      - i. If you get a lot, pick the top one or two.
    - b. “What might help you achieve this goal this week?” (for example maybe a support person, or an SMS from counselor)
9. Homework: “You have your goal as homework this week. Please also monitor your use of alcohol/drugs. I am excited and think that you will achieve your goal! Very good work today!”

REMEMBER HOMEWORK STEPS: WHAT WHEN, HOW LONG, REMINDER, RATE FEELINGS BEFORE AND AFTER